

# **THE MAN AND HIS WORK**

**FOREWORD BY**

**LAJPAT RAI**

**Dosiah C. Wedgwood**

**PUBLISHERS**

**S. GANESAN & CO.,  
Triplicane, Madras.**

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G. R. C. MADRAS—12-'20—1000

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high ;  
Where knowledge is free ;  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by  
narrow domestic walls ;  
Where words come out from the depth of truth ;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection ;  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the  
dreary desert sand of dead habit ;  
Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought  
and action ;  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.  
This is my prayer to Thee, my Lord—strike, strike at the root of  
penury in my heart ;  
Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows ;  
Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service ;  
Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees  
before insolent might ;  
Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles ;  
And give me the strength to surrender my strength to Thy Will  
with love.

—Rabindranath Tagore



#### PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

Although Col. Wedgwood's name is by this time well-known in the country as a stout champion of our interests in Parliament, he yet remains but a name of grateful memory and the public have little idea of the extent of his services and the intimate study he has made of the Indian question. This is due, it need hardly be said, not to their indifference to his doings, but to the lack of a continuous and adequate account of them. In bringing out this volume, it has been the endeavour of the publishers to supply this necessary account of his activities, in many cases, as revealed by his own writings and speeches, and it is hoped that it will meet with the requirements alike of the Indian Publicist and the Indian Patriot.



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## FOREWORD

I have known Colonel Wedgwood personally for the last three years. But even before I met him I felt that he was a friend. We became friends without knowing each other personally. He read my book "Young India" and formed his opinion of me. That opinion he expressed in the foreword, which, in response to a request made to him by the "Home Rule for India League" of London, he wrote for the English edition of the book. Before I read that foreword, I knew nothing about the English edition, nor about Colonel Wedgwood, but a reading of the foreword convinced me that he was a friend.

The opinion that I formed of him has been confirmed by subsequent events. India has no more sincere, devoted and truer friend in the British Isles than Colonel Wedgwood. He befriends India because he hates tyranny, oppression and injustice and loves liberty and freedom. He is a friend of India because India is being unjustly oppressed by alien people even though that people happen to be his own. He works for India because he believes that by working for India he is advancing the cause of human liberty and real democracy. He is opposed to Imperialism and Capitalism, yet he hates none. He is a thinker

and a scholar and also a very fine and impressive speaker. Even the *London Times* has felt compelled to praise his broad outlook, his pure motives and his chaste language. For a Radical of Radicals, to be praised by the *London Times* in that way is a real compliment.

Colonel Wedgwood does not see eye-to-eye with the Indian Nationalists, in the matter of all Indian problems. For instance, he is a single taxer and a strong free trader. He believes in and practises single tax with the zeal of a missionary. As such he is opposed to the permanent settlement of land. He is equally opposed to protective duties. But he believes in, and advocates, a free India. He wishes India to remain a part of the British Commonwealth, out of her own free will and by her consent. He thinks we might as well have taken advantage of the Reform Scheme and carried on Non-co-operation from within. In this he betrays an ignorance of bureaucratic methods and speaks with the voice of inexperience. But he is absolutely sincere and disinterested. Above all, he is a true internationalist and is qualified to take a broad view of world politics. I am proud of his friendship and I am grateful for his championship of India's right to freedom. In the struggle before us, we need the friendship and good-will of men like Colonel Wedgwood, but, even more than that, the benefit of their advice and judgment. Even if we reject his advice, we shall do so after the best consideration

and we will never question his sincerity and his motives.

Colonel Wedgwood has now seen India for himself; he has met Indians in their thousands; he has interviewed all parties and the representatives of all shades of political opinion; he has besides heard the story of the bureaucracy and taken their point of view, on their own dinner tables and in their own palatial quarters. He is thus most fitted to take an impartial view of Indian problems and is entitled to receive a respectful hearing, whenever he stands up to speak on Indian affairs in the House of Commons.

With such a friend in the House, we need have no fear of our views going unstated and unrepresented there. He is an asset, the value of which cannot be over-estimated, because whatever is said in the House of Commons, receives publicity all over the world and is read with attention. What India needs, outside of India, is publicity; what we need inside, is organization, Colonel Wedgwood cannot help us in organizing our forces, but he can help us by placing facts and figures relating to India, and also our point of view, before the thinking world. That is the service which we expect of him; and we are confident he will not fail to render it.

LAJPAT RAI



# Josiah C. Wedgwood

## CHAPTER I

### FROM BIRTH TO PARLIAMENT.

Josiah Clement Wedgwood, the subject of this study, comes of an ancient, well-known family. His great grand-father, the other Josiah Wedgwood, lived in the eighteenth century, from 1730 to 1795, and was the most famous of English potters. Born at Burslem at the beginning of the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the elder Josiah, it is perhaps well to remind readers, served an apprenticeship that carried him through all the branches of the trade, and in 1759 was able to set up in business for himself with the money he had saved. It is useful to recall the perseverance, the carefulness and the tenacity of purpose of the great potter as throwing some light on the peculiar characteristics of his great grandson. Josiah the Potter persevered through failure after failure, and, so it is recorded, produced in a few years such an

improved form of ware that it came into great demand. We shall see later on how this great quality of perseverance, undaunted by failure, defying ridicule and scorning timid advice of friends, was inherited by his great grandson. Though but a potter and an artisan, Josiah the elder had yet the qualities of a "gentleman" in him. He knew the value of culture. He paid infinite pains on the artistic as well as the other qualities of his wares. It is well-known to the elder generation of men how Smiles has taken care to narrate the potter's story so as to elucidate his greatness. The *Self-Help*, however, is not a book so much in vogue to-day as it was in our youth, perhaps a matter for regret. For our present purpose, it is enough to state that Josiah revolutionised the pottery industry. He engaged Flaxman to make classical designs for him, and, as a popular account of him has put it, his pottery became the fashion, and led to a great extension of the Staffordshire earthenware industry, his works at Etruria having been the most extensive of the kind in Britain. Being a great grandson of the famous potter, young Josiah comes of a sturdy middle class family which has, through

at least one of its members, left its market on the new industrial England.

## i

Josiah Clement Wedgwood was born of this middle class artisan family in the year 1872. His father, C. F. Wedgwood of Barlaston and Etruria, was the great Potter's son. His mother, Emily C. Rendel, was a sister of the first Lord Rendel. He had his general education in a public school, as was the case with youths of the middle class families of the type of Wedgwodds. The school which it was the fortune of "Jos." Wedgwood to enter was one of the new foundations, the Clifton College, Bristol, which was founded in 1862 and which received its charter in 1877. The school consisted of three sides—the Classical, the Modern and the Military sides. Young Josiah received his liberal education in this new, but rising public school, which was fast becoming popular. His later life showed full well how he imbibed the spirit of the motto of his school, Clifton College, the motto, *Spiritus intus alit.*

After receiving the essentials of a good secondary education in this public school,

Josiah proceeded to the Royal Naval College at Greenwich as a scholar of the Clifton College. In those days, as now, the Royal Naval Colleges as well as Sandhurst were well patronised by the squirearchy and the youths of the blue-blood who found in the training there a congenial calling, when they were not satisfied with military training as a hobby. Many a noble youth, who was destined to become a noble lord later, went as a matter of course to one of these Colleges, for there was nothing more honourable in life and nothing perhaps so easily guaranteed social distinction and status, as the noble profession of carrying arms, none, that is to say, as becoming a blue-jacket or a tommy. The attraction of military and naval life was enhanced by the fact that the Royal family patronised it. Our present king, for instance, is a Sailor King, and our present Prince of Wales is a Sailor Prince. Both are blue-jackets. This is enough to explain the fact of the middle-class men not only, but also the aristocracy, resorting freely to these naval and military educational institutions.

The Regulations for the entry of Naval Cadets do not appear in those days to have

been any the less exacting than they are now. The present Regulations lay down that the candidates must be of pure European descent and must be British subjects. There is a Selection Committee which has to interview each candidate, the appointments being made by the First Lord of the Admiralty on the recommendation of the Committee, subject to the candidate also passing a qualifying literary examination. The age limits are now between 12 and 13 years, but whether this was so then is immaterial to our present purpose. We shall be content with the fact that Josiah looked to the Navy for a career, if to anything, and that with this object in view, joined the Royal Naval College at Greenwich early in his life.

His College, the Greenwich Royal Naval College, is now under a Vice-Admiral. Josiah joined this College and learnt Naval Engineering. This College is now open to officers of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marine, the Royal Indian Marine, Mercantile Marine, to Probationary Assistant Constructors and to private students of Naval Architecture. It is orga-

nised to provide instruction for the Marine and Naval officers in all branches of theoretical and scientific study bearing upon their profession. A medical school for officers of that branch is now attached to the College, but it did not exist in Josiah's days, having been established but in 1911. It is at this well-known school of naval engineering and naval architecture that Josiah Wedgwood prepared himself for the profession he had such attraction for; and he was a full-blown naval engineer ere he passed out of his teens.

## ii

Soon after leaving his Naval College, Wedgwood seems to have entered service in a subordinate capacity as Naval Architect's Assistant. We have little information on this point. But in the closing decade of the last century, we find him at Portsmouth as Assistant Constructor in the Royal Corps of Naval Constructors. Those were days when the British naval supremacy was not as much sought to be challenged as it was later on. There was little difficulty in maintaining the "two power standard" and Germany had not

as yet entered upon that policy of feverish naval activity which she subsequently did, necessitating Britain to adopt a superiority of 60 per cent. in vessels of the dreadnaught type over the German Navy. In subsequent years, several changes were introduced into the Navy, especially during the time when Lord Fisher, then Sir John Fisher, was the First Sea Lord, and during that when Mr. Churchill took charge of the Admiralty in 1913. However, young Josiah was not without scope for activities in his days at Portsmouth which had no less than about fifteen docks, large and small, able to take in the construction of vessels in sizes varying from dreadnaughts to small steamers. Josiah remained at Portsmouth but for a year, 1895—96. Leaving Portsmouth, we see him at Elswick Shipyard as Naval Constructor and then at other places, holding the post of Naval Constructor till the year 1899.

## iii

This year saw the outbreak of the South African War between the Boers and the British, a war which seriously taxed the resources of the Government. Wedgwood

volunteered his services in this war. He was the Captain of the Elswick battery in that war. He distinguished himself in the war, earned promotions and won a medal with three clasps. At the close of the war, he was appointed the Resident Magistrate of Ermelo in Transvaal, a post which he held with conspicuous distinction for two years, 1902—04. He subsequently returned to England and entered Parliament.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY PARLIAMENTARY CAREER.

Captain Wedgwood, as he then was, entered Parliament as Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme in the year 1906 as a staunch Liberal with a clear bent towards Radicalism. By birth, by attainments, by training and by subsequent experience extending over some years and over a fairly wide range of affairs, he was eminently fitted to enter the august House. He belonged to the sturdy new middle class which prided itself on its ability and not on its birth or even wealth. His was originally an artisan family and was well able to sympathise with the lower strata of society. He had a sound education, a careful training, a wide experience of men and things. He was therefore eminently fitted to take an intelligent interest in the debates in the Commons and contribute to their fruitfulness by observations which are the results of common sense acting on study and experience. He was still a young man, was but thirty-four years old, and had that cultured leisure and youth

which combines earnestness with ability and ability with experience and which therefore results in safe yet fruitful action. To these qualities, he added in himself an amount of sturdy, but polite, independence which, while ever prepared to hear, was not afraid to strike when a right contingency for it arose. *Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*

## i

Of Wedgwood's early Parliamentary career, it is not proposed here to say much. The many purely British issues of a more or less local character which he gallantly fought in the Commons are not likely to be of interest to the average Indian reader. We must be content with saying that he discharged his duties as Member of Parliament as a staunch Liberal, leaning to the Left Wing of that Party, if we may import Continental party politics phraseology into English Party politics. Of one thing, however, we cannot fail to set something down here, not only because it is somewhat typical of all his later activities, but also because the matter by itself was not one of local, but of universal, importance. We

*Early Parliamentary Career*

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refer, of course, to the great campaign for the taxation of land values.

ii

The history of this most interesting agitation is too long to be entered into fully here. We must, however, set down some of the salient features of it and point out the part that Wedgwood played in this campaign; for, it was not only an interesting campaign by itself, but it also illustrates what sort of man Wedgwood is. As President of the English Land Values Taxation League, Wedgwood threw himself heart and soul into this agitation. The English League, as its Scottish counter-part, arose out of the English and Scottish Land Restoration Leagues. These latter societies were started in London and Glasgow respectively to put into practice the lessons derived from the doctrines expounded by Henry George in his work *Progress and Poverty* and on his lecturing tours through England and Scotland. Stated broadly, the doctrines were that with the increase in industrial progress, there will be greater and increasing poverty, unless there was no monopoly in land.

The arguments of George may perhaps be summarised as follow: Every industry is dependent directly or indirectly on the products of land. Progress in industry means greater demand for land as well as for labour, more for land than for labour. In the competition between the land-owners and labour for the fruits of this industry, labour, having no monopoly and being perishable, will go to the wall. Therefore, if labour, that is, the general population, is to benefit by progress in industry, it can only be by ensuring that land-owners are deprived of the increased rent due to increased demand for land and distributed to labour or the general public either by the taxation of land values or, better, by that more extreme variety of the reform suggested, namely, by the adoption of tax on land alone, that is, of the single tax system. The theory is that every industry or occupation being dependent on land, any tax on land could be shifted to the necessary extent on others, based on the theory of the diffusion of taxes, the land-owner or cultivator being not affected in any way because only unearned increment will be taken away from him by taxation.

Indeed, George's theory is but a development of one aspect of the Ricardian theory of rent and value and of Mill's theory of unearned increment, and, of course, pushed to extremes, the theory may become absurd, but, understood in the right way, with all its limitations, it may yield, as events have shown, valuable lessons.\*

## iii

George's theory, which has been stated above in its most acceptable form, was adopted by the English and the Scottish Leagues and the League's Members in Parliament set themselves to put it into practice. More than one Bill for the taxation of land values were promoted in the House by private Members, the most important of them being that of Mr. C. P. Trevelyn and that of Dr. Macnamara. The drastic amendment, amounting to rejection, by the Lords, of the Government's own modest Bill of 1906 applicable to Scotland brought matters to a head, and the Taxation of Land Values Group in the Commons set itself to promote a grand memorial to Government. The memorial was

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\* For a trenchant criticism of George's theory, see his own countryman Major Walker's *Political Economy*, pp. 417—433.

ready in 1909. It was presented to Government that very year, signed by no less than 250 Members of Parliament, and urging the inclusion of a tax on land values in the next Budget.

The result was the now famous budget of Mr. Lloyd George, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, holding views on the matter identical with those of Mr. Wedgwood at that time. That Budget, it is now well-known, embodied certain land value duties. It also provided for a complete valuation of all land in the United Kingdom. The thin end of the wedge was thus inserted to the satisfaction of the Taxation of Land Values Group. The taxation proposals were, however, of a very timid nature in their opinion, and this Group in Parliament, composed of Liberal and Labour Members who favoured such taxation, issued a statement of policy which they wished to be followed. The Land and Taxation Reform Memorial, as this statement is now known, was characterised by three important features. It demanded, for one thing, that the land valuation should be made public. For another,

it wanted that the local authorities should be empowered to levy rates on the valuation. Thirdly, the Group asked for a provision in the Budget for a tax to be levied on all land-values, to be applied : (a) in providing a national fund to be allocated toward the cost of such services as education, poor relief, main roads, asylums, and police ; and (b) in substitution of the existing duties on tea, sugar, cocoa, and other articles of food. Subsequent events have shown the large amount of success that attended the campaign of the League : so much so indeed that taxation of land values on well-defined lines, and with reference to all the circumstances of the case, is now an accepted fiscal policy with almost all the advanced nations. Many members of the League were, however, not content with what they considered this but partial success. They wanted the country to adopt the system of single tax. But this system has, in the circumstances of modern life, too many limitations that the support for it at present at any rate among statesmen, financiers and economists is very limited indeed.\* Mr. Asquith declared in 1912

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\* Bastable, *Public Finance*, pp. 431-434

that it had not even one supporter in the Cabinet and it is doubtful if the Cabinet has since contained men who were altogether for it.

The above incident is noteworthy from our point of view as showing Wedgwood's predilections, his progressive outlook, his close relations with Labour Members and his fighting temperament. How this progressive outlook and this cordial and intimate relations with Labour bore fruit later on will transpire in a subsequent chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE WAR AND WAR SERVICES.

On that fateful day, August 4, 1914, the declaration was made by His Majesty's Government that England was in a state of war with Germany. The news flashed throughout the country amid the wildest scenes of an unparalleled outburst of enthusiasm. Captain Wedgwood of course shared in this general enthusiasm. He was a gallant soldier and every gallant soldier likes to participate in a just war. Let there be no mistake on this point. There are doubtless many "gallant" soldiers who delight in war, not because it is just, but because it is war. The German militarists are of this type: war to these is an end in itself, and is to be courted rather than shunned. Wedgwood had of course distinguished himself in the field, but he did not like soldiering for the mere pleasure of the excitement that the occupation afforded. He had higher aims, far more noble ends: he was not a militarist; he was a cultured humanitarian.

## i

Those who have known him personally and moved with him closely have ever written of him thus. "Col. Wedgwood, I know," writes Mr. St. Nihal Singh, that well-known Indian journalist resident in England, "is one of Mr. Gandhi's greatest admirers, and a genuine believer in soul-force as opposed to brute force. That may sound strange to those who do not know our friend personally, and who think that because he has a formidable jaw, military titles and honours, and fought gallantly in East and South Africa and in Gallipoli, he is a son of Mars." "The fact is," continues Mr. St. Nihal Singh, "that he applies the doctrines of Krishna in his every-day life. He does not believe in war, nor does he fight for fight's sake. But if, in order to right wrongs, he finds it necessary to engage in battle, he does not hesitate to do so, but acts without thought of reward. He is as gentle as a woman with all his bluffness and courage."\*

Wedgwood approved of this war and took an active part in it, because he saw it was

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\* *The Hindu*, October 14.

entered into to right a wrong. Nothing does he hold so dear, true patriot that he is, as his country's honour; and he takes care in all his speeches to emphasise this point whether those speeches be on Russia or on Egypt or on India or on the distant Siberia. When Germany violated Belgian neutrality and when she declared war on France, there was England's plighted word to be redeemed : England had been by treaties bound to help these unfortunate countries against their rapacious neighbour ; and that was enough to make Wedgwood determine his attitude towards the War. In short, he fought, Englishmen fought, in his view, for President Wilson's now famous Fourteen Points\* and the glorious traditions of a people in liberty.† Unfortunately, the militaristic spirit in the Allied countries has deflected allied policy from its original goal ; but that is not Wedgwood's fault, and no one has protested against this deflection so stoutly as he. That is, however, by the way. For the present, we have to pass on to consider Wedgwood's part in the War.

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\* *Hansard*, 6th June, 1919.

† *The Mesopotamia Minority Report*.

## ii

Before we do so, however, it is perhaps well to set down here some typical illustrations of Wedgwood's gallantry, illustrations which would throw considerable light on his character and on his ideas of civilised warfare.

For one thing, Wedgwood never stooped to strike at a stricken foe, though none fought so hard as he and with such untiring, dauntless courage and might till the enemy was down. Death he certainly preferred to dishonour, and, indeed, it is the honour of his country that always provides him with the touch-stone with which to judge of men and measures. He was as harmless as a dove to his mightiest and deadliest foe, if he be fallen. And he values the dignity of man so much that he will not stoop to the degrading practices of according humiliating treatment to fallen foes. In May or June last year, he came to know that the Germans in the Occupied Area in Germany were subjected to the humiliating practice of having to take off their hats and stepping off side-walks on meeting British officers. Wedgwood hated this practice degrading

to the dignity of England and suggested, by means of a question in the Commons, that it be discontinued. Mr. Churchill, pompous militarist that he is, pompously stated that he was not prepared to deprive the Army of this its privilege! Wedgwood thereupon put a supplementary question suggesting to adopt the American practice and asked if the American Army considered this "privilege" necessary to maintain its dignity and authority. In that question, Wedgwood hit at the difference in the methods of a bourgeoisie democracy and a pure democracy. Mr. Churchill did not yield, observing that he was not in need of the American practice and that he did not want to borrow it!

A similar incident occurred in the course of a debate in the Commons on the Russian situation. The blockade of Russia and Germany was objected to by those who agreed with Wedgwood on the ground that people, women and children included, who had no responsibility for the War, were seriously injured by the blockade. Sir Charles Warner, defending the blockade, admitted that the

innocent suffered, but asked whether the opponents of the blockade meant that the German women and children suffered. Here is the *Hansard* report of the incident:

Colonel WEDGWOOD (with reference to the suffering of German women):  
Hear, hear !

Sir Charles WARNER: Does he forget that these women cheered the War?

Lieutenant-Commander KENWORTHY:  
Not the children.

Sir Charles WARNER: No, not the children. The innocent always have to suffer, and, whatever you do, you cannot save the children from suffering.....Perhaps the hon. and gallant Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Colonel Wedgwood) forgets that our children are suffering.

Colonel WEDGWOOD: I do not forget, but I object to kicking my enemy when I got him down, and that seems to be the policy of the hon. and gallant Member opposite.

Sir Charles WARNER: The hon. and gallant Member says that these women are the innocent people who are suffering. These are the women who spat in the faces of our wounded, who did everything to torture our wounded whenever they could. These women are the people who praised the Kaiser and everything that he did all through the war until they were beaten. It is true that the women of Cologne are now fawning at the feet of the British soldier now that Germany is beaten, and the men as well; but it was not until they were beaten, and if they got the upper hand again—and the sort of suggestions we have been listening to may in time give them the power again—they will be just as bad as they were in the past, unless they learn that people have to suffer who commit atrocities, and unless they learn that there is something to pay for having broken every law of civilised nations...

Colonel WEDGWOOD: We shall pay.

Sir Charles WARNER: The hon. and gallant Member says we shall pay; but I would like to ask what law of civilisation are we breaking when we held the blockade until the terms of peace are signed.

Colonel WEDGWOOD: Making peace on Bismarckian lines.

Colonel Wedgwood's gallantry and kindly feelings are not confined to the human among the living genera: it extends to the animal world as well. "Not very long ago," writes Mr. St. Nihal Singh, "Colonel Wedgwood entered the House of Commons with his head bandaged up and limping painfully. Of course, every one wanted to know what had happened to him, expecting to hear a tale of dash and daring. To their great surprise they learned that he had chosen to suffer thus in order to save the life of a kitten which had suddenly run in front of his bicycle on which he was riding to St. Stephen's from his flat in Chelsea. He had seen the little thing just in time, swerved quickly out of his course, run into the

pavement and fallen from his machine, scratching and bruising himself. He did not care a straw about his injuries, however. All he thought of was that the kitten had not been killed."

## iii

Of Wedgwood's war services, we shall not say anything at length. We daresay the story of these services contains many exploits courageously undertaken and efficiently carried out. He was more than once mentioned in the Despatches, three times, we believe ; he was promoted to the rank of Commander at first ; he was subsequently raised to the rank of Colonel ; and he was admitted to the Distinguished Service Order, not a cheap honour, as anyone who knows of military affairs knows. These speak for themselves as to the worth and valour of the man as a military officer, and we do not propose to enter into the detailed story of his services.

We may however add a few lines about the wide range of his field of activities. When the war broke out, he volunteered his services

in the field. He joined the army as Lieut-Commander of the Royal Navy Voluntary Rifles and saw service in three continents. He was in the thickest of the fray at Antwerp, and during the critical days of the war, we see him in the trenches of France. His scene of service then shifts from France to the South-Eastern Europe, to Dardenelles, to Gallipoli. He served not only in these places, he served in East Africa as well—a continent of portions of which he had good and personal knowledge. In all theatres of war, wherever he was, whether it was in France or Turkey, or the regions which separate Europe from Asia, or in the distant and dark continent, Wedgwood distinguished himself by his conscientious and earnest service. And his service was of course appreciated. He won the D.S.O. in Gallipoli so early in the War as the year 1915; and along with the D.S.O., he won also severe wounds at the same place.

## iv

Wedgwood's services to the War did not stop here. His services were in demand in other capacities too and were eagerly requisitioned. He was a member, for instance, sent

by the Government to survey conditions in Siberia and see how far Bolshevik tyranny prevailed there and to what extent the anti-Bolshevik agency which wanted to establish or had already established a Government there independent of the Bolsheviks had support from the people. We know little about his exact views on this matter, not having come across published reports about the results of the mission: but of one thing, there is little doubt, and that is that the knowledge of Russia that he gained at that time, he utilised to good purpose later on in connection with Government's Russian policy. Of this, we shall have to say more in a subsequent chapter.

We may also mention that he served as Assistant Director of Trench Warfare in 1919, an office which, as its name implies, requires a considerable knowledge of this species of warfare, which came first into importance during the Boer War in which he served, and which has considerably been improved now.

To these war services, may perhaps be added his mission, along with others, to

Central Europe on behalf of the Labour Party, which went to survey conditions in the Occupied Area and whose attitude must have had not a little to do with the later relaxation of the terms of the Versailles Treaty to the good of the Central Powers as well as to the world at large.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MESOPOTAMIA REPORT.

Towards the middle of 1917, Wedgwood was called upon to serve on the Parliamentary Commission, which was appointed to enquire into the Mesopotamian campaign and allocate responsibility for its abject and disastrous failure. Lord George Hamilton was appointed Chairman of the Commission and its other members were Lord Donoughmore, Lord Hugh Cecil, M.P., Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, General Sir Neville Lyttleton, Sir A. Williamson, M.P., Mr. J. Hodge, M.P., and Commander J. Wedgwood, M.P. The last-mentioned, it is noteworthy, was added to the Commission by a direct vote of the Commons. The Commission reported towards the end of June. The Report created a great sensation at the time by its free censure of great personages, including the members of the War Committee, the Viceroy of India, Lord Hardinge, the Commander-in-chief of India, Sir Beauchamp Duff, General Sir John Nixon and others. Wedgwood wrote a separate minute, trenchantly

criticising the conduct of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief.

## i

Before we pass on to consider this Minute, we shall perhaps do well to know something of the facts about the Campaign and the views of the Majority Report. "The Mesopotamian Expedition," as the Commission pointed out, "originated in a Minute by General Barrow, Military Secretary at the India Office, to the Secretary of State for India, dated September 26, 1914, suggesting that a force should be sent from India to occupy Basra in the event of Turkey joining in the War. The advantages of such an expedition were stated by General Barrow to be that it would checkmate Turkish intrigues and demonstrate our ability to strike; it would encourage the Arabs to rally to us; it would safeguard Egypt, for, without Arab support a Turkish invasion of Egypt was impossible; and it would effectually protect the oil installations at Abadan, in which the Admiralty had a large interest."

The expedition, it must be understood at the outset, was to be conducted by the Indian

Government, which despatched secretly from Bombay, early in October 1914 a brigade of British and Indian troops, with orders to occupy Abadan Island and the port of Basra. Soon afterwards the expeditionary force was increased to 15,000, and Basra was occupied at very small cost. The next objective of this force was Kurna, 50 miles north of Basra, and this town surrendered early in December. The concentration of the Turks led to a second division of the troops being sent, and the whole command was placed in the hands of General Sir John Nixon, medical equipment and river transport proved very deficient, and the Commission considered that "they do not appear to have had sufficient recognition by the Indian Government."

The subsequent story of misunderstandings and insufficient grasp of the situation is easily told. Sir John Nixon prepared himself to advance on Baghdad after securing the safety of the oil-fields. General Townshend advanced to Kut-el-Amara, and that town was captured by him towards the end of September. The situation now was most

alluring and, unfortunately, most deceptive. Confident of success, Sir John forwarded a plan of action to Simla. Sir Beauchamp Duff was evidently not satisfied that it would result in success, if adopted; for, he wrote on it: "Unless we can get back troops from France, Egypt or elsewhere, I fear that Baghdad, invaluable as its capture would be, is out of the question."

Nixon's confidence of success was, however, too strong to avert the courting of what appeared to competent men a certain disaster; and, combined with the cupidity of the India Office and the weakness of the Government of India, the disaster was courted. Nixon wired: "I consider I am strong enough to open the road to Baghdad, and, with this intention, I propose to concentrate at Azizie." Owing to the subsequent failure of General Townshend to defeat the Turks before they settled at Ctesiphon and as a result of military consultation, General Nixon was ordered to stop the advance. But as ill-luck would have it, Mr. Chamberlain, the then Secretary of State for India, wired to Nixon:

“To both occupy and hold Baghdad, what addition do you require to your present force are you confident will be necessary?” Nixon’s reply was that “no additions are necessary to my present force,” but that he would require more men to occupy the city permanently. Lack of foresight in Simla and Whitehall which were blind to the vital question of transport made them fall in with the views of this enticing General without considering the consequences, and Nixon’s advance was duly authorised. One man on the spot was, however, sceptical about the success of this proposed venture, but he was a subordinate. General Townshend was conscious of the “great risk” he was called upon to undertake, but he advanced to attack the Turkish trenches at Ctesiphon, only to be repelled, after penetrating to the second line, with heavy loss by enemy counter-attacks. General Townshend had to retire behind the walls of Kut. It is now well-known how bravely he withstood the onslaughts of the enemy on this feeble fortress, with a quiet heroism surpassing that of Sale at Jelalabad. He held out in the hope of getting relief which had been ordered, till

famine, pestilence and privation, rarely surpassed in the recent annals of warfare, compelled him to raise the white flag. Of the attempted relief of Kut, the Commission wrote: "The history of the attempts to relieve Kut is melancholy reading enough, a record of a prolonged struggle carried on with inadequate means under abnormal conditions of atrocious weather, and terminating in failure." It was after the failure of these repeated attempts that Townshend surrendered on that memorable day, April 29, 1915. The Commission found that the main causes of the failure to relieve Kut "were premature attacks, inadequate transport, and insufficient numerical superiority over a strongly entrenched enemy."

## ii

The final verdict of the Commission was this: "The unpreparedness of the Indian Army for its task in Mesopotamia was primarily due to a long-standing policy of economy and restriction of military preparation to the needs of frontier warfare, for which the Home and Indian Governments were, of course, responsible and not Sir Beauchamp Duff and the General

Staff at Simla. But the unpreparedness for overseas warfare was well-known to the Indian military authorities; and when they undertook the management of an expedition which was to fight Turkey, supported by Germany, they ought immediately to have striven energetically to bring the equipment of the expedition up to the standard of modern warfare. The Indian Government were guilty of omissions in nearly every branch of military provision, with the exception of the commissariat, though even here the standard was low and the distribution of food uneven. Serious defects in military equipment resulting in unnecessary suffering and casualties amongst the troops, were allowed to persist month after month during the first fourteen months of the campaign, when the Indian Government were responsible for its management."

Of the responsibility for failure, the Commission wrote: "The division of responsibility between the India Office and the Indian Government, the former undertaking policy and the latter the management, of the expedition, was, in the circumstances, unworkable. The Secre-

tary of State, who controlled the policy, did not have cognisance of the capacity of the expedition to carry out the policy. The Indian Government, who managed the expedition, did not accompany developments of policy with the necessary preparations even when they themselves proposed those developments. The scope of the objective of the expedition was never sufficiently defined in advance, so as to make each successful move part of a well-thought-out and matured plan."

Such was the Majority view. What of the Minority, the solitary individual, that is to say, who wrote the separate Minute? This we shall examine presently.

### iii

Commander Wedgwood's separate Minute is, in the light of the just issued Esher Report, a most important document. That document may be said to consist of two parts, broadly speaking. The first part is a criticism of the past: the second a guidance for the future. And of these two parts, it is needless to say that the second is far more important than the first. The first is topical, of interest only to

the moment, of what has already passed irrecoverably into the irrevokable past ; the second is of permanent value, of what could be done with advantage in the future in the light of what we failed to do in the past with results deeply disastrous to us.

The substance of the first part may be summarised in a few words. The campaign, as the Majority Report pointed out, failed simply on account of proper personnel and equipment. Whose was the duty to supply these deficiencies ? Certainly that of the management, the Government of India. Did they do it ? Did the Viceroy and the Commander-in-chief who, between them and to the unconstitutional exclusion of the other Members of the Government of India, conducted the campaign, take sufficient care to provide the increased personnel and equipment which they knew—and Sir Beauchamp Duff's endorsement of the Nixon plan shows they knew—were essential to the success of the campaign ? They did not. Can they plead that India was not able or incapable of providing the necessaries for success ? They could not, says Commander

Wedgwood. He rates the generosity and the enthusiasm of the princes and people of India at a higher value and, perhaps, in the light of our subsequent achievement, asks, whether, if Lord Hardinge had made the necessary appeal to the public, sufficient man-power and "material-power" would not have been forthcoming. Decidedly, concludes Wedgwood, on those who failed to do it, on the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Hardinge and Sir Beauchamp Duff, respectively, must be laid the responsibility for the disastrous failure of the campaign. The responsibility of these high officials is all the greater because they kept the public, and even their constitutional colleagues, ignorant of the whole thing by the imposition of a stupidly rigid censorship; for, but for this censorship, the position would have earlier been depicted to the public at its true gravity and the untimely, ill-equipped and disastrously calamitous march on Baghdad, suggested by Simla, encouraged by Whitehall and undertaken by the dangerous foolhardiness of an over-enthusiastic General might have been postponed to a more auspicious occasion.

The logic of these arguments appears at first sight irresistible ; and, but for certain circumstances peculiar to India, will have been unreservedly accepted as correct. The circumstances are however there, and Commander Wedgwood's unsparing indictment of Lord Hardinge was severely discounted by the Indian public. The position, as we said, is peculiar ; and we cannot see eye-to-eye with him in this question : for, "Commander Wedgwood looks at it from the point of view of one who thinks that the resources of India have not been thrown into the energetic conduct of the War. That position cannot be maintained except as to man-power, and in that respect India was quite willing to do more and to do promptly, if her preferred co-operation had not been given the cold shoulder."\* It is only necessary to mention Lord Hardinge's defence of his conduct in the Lords, of Sir William Meyer's in the Imperial Council, the financial stringency that the Government of India is experiencing to-day and its relation to the vast field of development work that awaits to be carried out in India, to carry home

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\* The London letter of the *Hindu*.

the conviction that the above criticism of the Wedgwood Minute is perfectly just.

## iv

As we have already said, however, it is the constructive part of the Wedgwood Minute that is more important and useful than the critical. The recommendations in this part cover a wide area, but they may, for convenience, sake, be brought broadly under two heads: those that relate to the formation of an efficient, an elastic, and a contented Indian Army, capable, in times of need, of considerable expansion for the benefit of the Empire. Efficiency, elasticity, and contentment—these indeed constitute the three canons on which any programme of Indian Army reform must, in his view, be based. And efficiency, Wedgwood sought to secure, first, by placing the Indian Army under the War Office, and, secondly, by arranging for the interchange of personnel between the British and the Indian armies. The latter suggestion suggested itself to him by his experience of Africa. It was the practice in Africa to draw periodically officer personnel for the King's African

Rifles from the British Army and draft the officers directly recruited for it to the British Army for a time. The arrangement, in short, operated, whatever the details, as the interchange of officer personnel between the Home and the African armies. This was felt to be very advantageous. The practice enabled the African army to be in constant touch with the latest developments in European warfare by which touch alone could the efficiency of the Army can be maintained in comparison with the armies of other advanced countries. Wedgwood recommended that some such thing should be done in regard to the Indian Army as well. His suggestions to secure elasticity, which implies expansiveness, were first, to grant the King's Commission to a larger number of Indians and thus do away with the defect of lack of officer personnel which was a serious limiting factor in regard to the expansion of the Army. Wedgwood pointed out that the fetish of seeking European personnel was an obstruction rather than a factor in efficiency, and he supported his contention by reference to the Turkish Army whose efficiency was beyond question, but

whose officer personnel was largely made up of the Turks. The experience of the campaigns with Turkey proved that Turkish officers did very well under German guidance; and he concluded that Indian officers would do equally well, if not better, under British guidance. The conclusion was that it was guidance and not personality that was required. The canon of contentment he sought to enforce by the grant of King's Commissions and by better payment and treatment of the Army.

These reforms would, no doubt, bring about the existence of an efficient and numerous Army. But what about the support behind it in the country? The extent of such support, as the War has amply demonstrated, will be the extent of its stable success; for, the fact is that the days of a successful mercenary army are long gone by—a fact recognised by none better than Commander Wedgwood. Was the extent of such support from India satisfactory? If not, why did not the Indian public support it sufficiently? These were the reasons which Wedgwood inquired into; and his recommend-

ations on the basis of these enquiries may be summed up under the head of measures to maintain the morale of the country on which depends the "material power", if not indeed the man-power as well. What were the obstacles on the path of greater enthusiasm in India, enthusiasm equal to that of the Dominions ?

Wedgwood sought an answer for this question and he found it. "In one of the papers put before us by the Indian Government", he writes, "in order to justify the contrast between the attitude of India and the attitude of the self-governing Dominions, they write: 'The self-governing Dominions deny to India the full privileges of citizenship. India, though not of her own volition, is practically a free market for the trade of the Empire, whereas the Colonies impose upon her trade.....a heavy handicap in the shape of protective tariffs, and are at liberty, as it would be urged, to equip themselves for an increased outlay on Imperial Defence by means from which she is debarred.' That, the Government urged, stood in the way of greater financial sacrifices on their part—an explanation to which we may add the influence of many of

our other disabilities as well, though we cannot admit that we have not rendered war services to the best of our abilities and capacity.

Wedgwood concluded his Minute with a memorable paragraph which is in fact an epitome of the faith that is in him. He wrote: "My last recommendation is that we should not deny to Indians 'the full privileges of citizenship', but to allow them a large share in the government of their own country and in the control of that bureaucracy which, in this War, uncontrolled by public opinion, has failed to rise to British standards. Lord Kitchener said that it would be better to lose India than the War. It would certainly be better to lose India than to lose that for which we are fighting the War—the glorious traditions of a people in liberty." Sounder advice to the Empire has never been given; but, alas! advice is sooner given than accepted, so that we find that, ere the ink with which these sentiments were penned was dry, it was ignored, if not also forgotten!

## v

Worse indeed has happened. Wedgwood's ideas about Army organization have

been slavishly stolen by the Esher Commissioners with but one difference, however. They have adopted the machinery, but rejected the spirit, of Wedgwood. All liberal traces in the Wedgwood Minute, all recommendations about King's Commission and equality of citizenship and others of the same type, have been scrupulously removed by the Esher Commissioners, but they have accepted his proposals for War Office control, interchange of personnel, the tapping of Indian resources and so on. They have perverted a machinery which was intended to admit India into an Empire of free equals into one which, with India's aid, may emasculate the freedom of India and other nations at India's own expense! Such is the difference between Imperialists true and false. Wedgwood stands for Imperialism of the beneficial variety, based on freedom, while O'Dwyer stands for the base Imperialism, based on militarism, which is parasitical in nature and thrives on exploitation. That is the claim of Wedgwood on the gratitude of the subject nations; and that the reason for their admiration of him.

## CHAPTER V

### INCREASING INTEREST IN INDIA.

Long before he indited the Mesopotamia Minority Report of which we have just spoken, Wedgwood had given evidence of his interest in India. Not long after he entered Parliament, in the days of the stirring Indian agitation of 1907 and 1908, Wedgwood raised his voice of protest against indiscriminate repression in India. Indeed, he started on his parliamentary career as a friend of India ; and if till lately others were better known as friends of India in Parliament than he, it was because of his quiet nature as well as of his other pre-occupations. The light was there, an unextinguishable one at that, and it needed only more of wax or of oil to make it burn brighter and steadier.

### i

And these were available in greater abundance now than in those days. For one thing, Wedgwood himself gained first-hand knowledge of Indians, having worked shoulder to shoulder with them in the terrible battle-

fields of France, Gallipoli and Africa. He had not visited India; but, if Muhammad did not go to the mountain, the mountain went to Muhammad. A continuous stream of deputations of various shades of opinion kept up going to England from India—a practice which was rare in the earlier days. Wedgwood had excellent opportunities of coming across these deputations. He had before him an India in miniature as it were. Democrat that he is, of all these deputations, he was attracted by the Nationalist Deputation under Mr. Tilak most. Of Wedgwood's services to this Deputation, the deputation sent by the Indian National Congress, we shall not pause to say much. He secured to them the widest possible publicity to their propaganda. He helped them arrange meetings, he himself presided over some of them. He was unwearied in bringing the suggestions of the Deputation before Parliament; he was their ever-vigilant and never-vexed mouth-piece in that august assembly: he was indeed the Member for India in a sense in which none hitherto has been, unsurpassed in willing service, unequalled in having precise information, untrammelled by doubts and fears.

From this fruitful Alliance between Wedgwood and the Congress, there flowed a series of questions in Parliament which at once deepened his knowledge of Indian affairs and kindled Parliamentary interest therein. The questions covered a wide range of subjects; they ranged from cultivation to currency and if we were to gather them together, they might well by themselves form a volume of respectable size. We shall not attempt that task. We shall be content with referring to some of the categories of questions which he put in the Commons and which are of general significance to India.

Among these questions the front rank must be given to those relating to the civil and constitutional liberties of India. Whoever had been unjustly deprived of his liberties, civil or constitutional, whether it be a class, a community or an individual, all of them found a willing and effective champion in Wedgwood. Of individuals, we might take the case of Lala Lajpat Rai, an exemplary Indian patriot, whom Wedgwood ironically referred to in the Commons as "a desperate, dangerous Indian

agitator." Lajpat Rai, of his own accord, had gone to America before the War. He wanted to go back to his own country. He applied for passports. But the British authorities, at the instance of the Government of India or otherwise, refused to grant him passports. Wedgwood took up the case of Mr. Lajpat Rai. Here is a British citizen, he argued, against whom no charges of a definite character have been made, prevented in an insidious, and not in an open, manner, from going to his own country. He interpellated the Home Office on the point. The only result was Sir George Cave's notorious reply that Mr. Rai was a dangerous agitator who was poisoning the minds of America against Britain. Sir George did not stop here. If we remember right, he even hinted that Lajpat Rai may have been in some way connected with the traitors at the San Francisco trial! Wedgwood, having failed in this first attempt, returned to the point at the earliest opportunity. And this time, he did not go to the Home Office. He bombarded the India Office where he thought he would meet with better success. He put questions intended to elicit answers establishing

the innocence of Mr. Rai. The India Office more than once attempted to steer clear of the Scylla of the Home Office and the Government of India and the Charybdis of Wedgwood ; and as often it was waylaid by Wedgwood and it failed in its attempts to escape. Colonel Yate, the redoubtable champion of the bureaucrat and the exploiter in India, flank-attacked Wedgwood in a series of questions in the Commons suggesting that Mr. Rai was a dangerous and unrepentant agitator involved in conspiracies to overthrow the Government as established by law in India. Wedgwood's pertinacity, however, succeeded in the end, the Secretary of State surrendered, promised to look into the papers and, after the close of the War, ordered the grant of passports to Mr. Lajpat Rai.

Mr. Rai's case was not the only one which Wedgwood espoused in the Commons. He fought for the release of Mrs. Besant and her colleagues who were interned by Lord Pentland's Government in Madras. He worked equally hard to get the deportation of Mr. Horniman cancelled. He has not hitherto been successful in this latter attempt. The

friction in this case is the vested interests in India and the Local Government which looked to these vested interests for support. Hence the failure. Mr. Montagu said in this connection that with Sir George Lloyd, or the wirepullers behind him, lay the liberties of Mr. Horniman. That is doubtless an unsatisfactory and cowardly answer. But there it is; and we have to get on with it for the present.

Of Wedgwood's other attempts to safeguard the civil liberties of India, we cannot speak at length. Last year he enquired of the Secretary of State as to the number of persons under internment and imprisonment without trial and the number released since the Armistice. The suggestion evidently was that the bureaucracy in India was using a weapon forged for war-time long after the necessity for its use ceased. Mr. Montagu promised to enquire, and the credit for the release of those subsequently released must in part at least be assigned to Colonel Wedgwood.

In regard to the Martial Law victims of the Punjab, Wedgwood came to know that

they had been deprived of their franchise. He felt the injustice of this course. These men had been in prison or had been sentenced doubtless; but they were not ordinary criminals; they were convicts only in the technical sense. Their offences were purely political and some of these offences may, in the moral sense, have been even meritorious services. To safeguard the self-respect of the country by refusing to crawl may be an offence in the eyes of the capricious law of a Dyer; but it is certainly a virtue in the eyes of self-respecting patriots. Wedgwood also urged that if these were dangerous agitators outside the Councils, by sending them inside the Councils they might be made to become the most useful and law-abiding of citizens.

Mr. Montagu was relentless at the time; he stated that the Royal amnesty did not constitute "a pardon" within the meaning of the Reforms Rules and that therefore he could not agree that they were eligible for elections and that if they were made eligible, there was no guarantee that the legislatures may [not become composed of

dangerous ex-convicts. Mr. Montagu, however, knew better than to persist in this stupid course; and what he failed to do in public, he seems to have contrived to be done in private. Whatever that be, in less than two months of his refusal to reverse the decision to disfranchise these men, orders had been issued in India granting "pardon" to mere political offenders who had not been convicted of any crime in the ordinary sense!

The above are what may be called the particular cases of curtailment of liberties which Wedgwood attempted, with more or less success, to set right. But he has done more than these. His services in regard to the agitation against the Rowlatt Acts and the Punjab atrocities remain to be chronicled; but, of this in a subsequent chapter.

## iii

This sort of desultory sniping and cruising activities of Wedgwood was not confined to attacks on personal and constitutional liberties. Wedgwood also wandered into the regions of administrative purity and public economy. It was one of Sir Michael O'Dwyer's methods

of implanting or extorting or purchasing or rewarding loyalty and public services by granting jagirs of great political value. Seeing how easily this method lends itself to the corruption of and militates against the maintenance of the purity of public life and a high standard of public conduct, Wedgwood sought to get this method of recognising public services put an end to. He had another motive in taking up this question. As one who believes in the Georgian theory of land values, he wanted to see that public lands were not alienated to capitalists to the future detriment of the State. In February last, he interpellated the Secretary of State on the point. The Secretary of State, with his usual anxiety not to offend the men on the spot, refused to interfere. That official, however, significantly added that he would ask the Government of India, firstly to supply a return of the public lands alienated to private owners in the Punjab in each of the last ten years if the figures were readily available, and, secondly, to report whether the grouping of these lands in the hands of capitalists was such as to make it desirable to re-consider the policy adopted in disposing of public domain.

That such an enquiry is urgently demanded would be evident from the case of Lala Sitaram, an Executive Engineer in the Punjab, who, in discharging his duty to Government, had to refuse the improper "requests" of a retired military officer of Government to whom a large grant of land had been made. And Lala Sitaram, was for this reason persecuted by the Punjab bureaucracy, was forsaken by its Simla brethren, and was retrieved from red ruin only by the accident that the Secretary of State happened to go through the whole case. An Indian gazetted officer of recognised ability was sought to be made a scape-goat of by the whole bureaucracy in India, simply because he did not slavishly oblige, with Government water by improper means, a European exploiter on whom the scandalous policy of granting lands bestowed an extensive tract of arable land!

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PUNJAB ATROCITIES.

Early in 1919, the Government of India, in pursuance of the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee, published two Bills, universally execrated in India as the Black Bills. That Committee raked up past stories, at least a decade old, and built upon them the possibility of the existence of a widespread seditious conspiracy in India. The procedure of the Committee was notoriously opposed to all judicial canons. The Government put before the Committee the sedition literature in their possession; the public or those concerned were not given any opportunity to controvert it and establish the cruel falsity of some of these documents; the names of such well-known, honourable Indian politicians as Tilak, Pal and Arabindo Ghosh were drawn into it along with those of assassins and anarchists. In short, the Report was an interesting compendium of C.I.D. gossip, anarchist literature—some of these genuine, but possibly more fabricated by the few anarchists to alarm Government, as

was the case, as has now been proved, with the forged incriminating letter purporting to come from Mr. Muhammad Ali—and panic-stricken reports from an inept police. There were undoubtedly isolated attempts at conspiracy—in which civilised, even advanced, and democratic country are there not?—but compared with the limited area, a house here and a house there, in which these nefarious attempts took place, not now, but years ago, these ought to anyone with some sense of proportion to be most insignificant.

The Government, in this matter, traded in the names of eminent judges, but, which judges, we ask, will refuse to draw from given, unsifted premises, the conclusions that the premises lead to? The judges in this case certainly did not judicially sift the evidence tendered by the Police or obtain independent evidence. They were given conspiracy documents and were asked to say what they were. Judges are not needed to do this; if they were needed for anything, it was for sifting evidence, and this they did not do and they were deliberately asked not to do. The judges

did not go behind the evidence, but on the strength of old conspiracies in one or two places in one or two presidencies, they recommended the desirability, if necessary, of some amendment of the Procedure Code and the criminal law of the country generally. Their view was not altogether decided, but was one somewhat in the nature of that of the Delphic oracle. This was, however, sufficient for the Indian bureaucracy to impose on the country more and tighter shackles; and the Black Bills, whose provisions were far more stringent than those indicated by the Rowlatt Committee, were passed in the teeth of the unanimous opposition not only of the country, but also of the Indian section of the legislature.

## i

Of the universal agitation in India against this "lawless law", the Civil Disobedience Movement initiated in connection with it, the popular detestation of it, the official hatred of this detestation, culminating in the repressive measures against Mr. Gandhi, the tragic consequences thereof in the Punjab and elsewhere—of these and other events connected therewith, we shall not now say much. Suffice

it to say, the agitation was carried from India to England and none was more useful to us there than our friend Colonel Wedgwood. He arranged meetings of protest and presided over some of them. Resolutions were passed at these after his spirited, but always dignified, speeches.

He carried the agitation from the country to the Commons. In his Budget speech for 1919,\* he advanced many arguments why these laws ought not to have been passed at all and why, having been passed, they should be vetoed by the Crown. "In the first place," he said, "if the Indians, not by a majority, but by absolute unanimity on the Viceroy's Legislative Council, say that they do not want that Act, then that measure ought not to be passed into law. Conceive what it would be here if you had legislation, not by a minority, but legislation against the unanimous wish of this House. How could you expect England to tolerate a law which was unanimously opposed by every single Member of this House? When a law is passed against the unanimous vote of every single elected Member of Parliament, a country is not likely to take it lying down and

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\* *Hansard*, 22nd May, 1919.

to accept the law, whether it be good or bad. I do not suppose there is one man in 100,000 in India who knows what the Rowlatt Act is, but they do know that their elected representatives voted against it to a man, and that in spite of that it was forced on the country." "That, I believe," he continued, "is the principal reason of the late riots—this absolute disregard of all those British traditions which are always upon our lips, but which we do not always conform to, when it comes to dealing with people whom we have governed for their good for so long. The fact that you are legislating against the unanimous wish of the people, whether it be good or bad legislation, is bound to damn that legislation and to give it no possible chance of operating with success."

It was not on this ground alone, a ground uppermost in the minds of all democrats, that Wedgwood opposed this legislation. He opposed it on the ground that it violated the fundamentals of personal liberty. "This Rowlatt Act," he said, "is the most lawless law, to use the word of Mr. Banerjee in the Indian Parliament, ever passed into law; it is simply

an administrative instruction. Any man can be put into prison if the district is proclaimed under the Rowlatt Laws. He can be put into prison and then he can appeal to a judge against it. The judge takes the papers and inquires into the case. He has not to say whether the man has committed any crime. All that he has to consider is that whether the political officer who decided that so and so was a dangerous person really thought that he was a dangerous person. That is legislating not merely for expediency, but legislating in the direct face of justice."

Wedgwood then went on to illustrate the dangers of such provisions. "I have known many people in my time," he said, "who have been extremely undesirable people according to many people in this country. Take the late Mr. Keir Hardie. There was never a time when a majority of this House would not gladly have seen Mr. Keir Hardie locked up. Take my friend Mr. Outhwaite, who was in the last Parliament. You could have always got almost an unanimous vote for locking up Mr. Outhwaite at any time. Take myself. I have

no doubt that many people would like to see me locked up. You might prove to the satisfaction of any of His Majesty's judges that you are right in thinking it well that Mr. Keir Hardie, Mr. Outhwaite, or myself were dangerous to society." "I do not think we are," added Wedgwood with evidently a pleasant twinkle in his eyes. "I think we are the salt of the earth, but other people think otherwise. They say that Wedgwood is a danger to society, and in the interests of society he ought to be locked up. The judge cannot say that it was to the interest of society that I should be locked up or not. If these individuals represent that I ought to be locked up, and they honestly think it, therefore I must remain locked up." "That is contrary to justice," pointed out Wedgwood, "but that is the principle you are applying to India, and it must cause a sense of injustice and irritation amongst the Indian population when you are legislating, not upon grounds which are just or unjust, but wholly on grounds of what is expedient or inexpedient."

Wedgwood drove home this contrast between justice and expediency and put in a

strong plea for adopting justice and not expediency as the basis of legislation and the administration of justice. Illustrating his case by a reference to the famous story of Cyrus as judge of the children's court wherein he was scolded for interchanging the coats of two boys according, not to their ownership, but to their fitness to body, that is to say, for basing his judgment on expediency and not on justice, Wedgwood observed: "If we had a little more justice in India, and a little less fitting coats in the name of expediency, it would be good to the British name in future and in the long run it would lead to happier relations between this country and India. The Rowlatt Bills are not only against law, but they are against the people."

## ii

The passing of the Rowlatt Laws, in the teeth of the unanimous opposition of the Non-official Members of the Indian Legislative Council of all shades of opinion and of the country at large, stirred feelings in the country to its profoundest depths. People began to question the fundamental bases on which

Indian Government rested and wondered whether a Government, be it that of the Tsar of all the Russias even, could afford to flout the unanimous public opinion in the country so obstinately, so directly, and so contemptuously as the Government of Lord Chelmsford did. The theory was at the same time put forward by Sir Michael O'Dwyer, that notorious pro consul of the Panjab, who has done more to destroy the prestige of Britain in India than all the bureaucrats put together and who is not a little responsible for the undermining of the confidence of the people in the British democracy, in a reckless spirit of contempt and arrogance that the basis of British Rule in India was force. In an interview with a well-known Punjab gentleman, Raizada Bhagat Ram, Sir Michael expressed sentiments to the following effect: "Raizada Sahib, in a remember there is a greater force than Gandhi's soul force." Lord Chelmsford himself, in a reported interview with Mr. Gandhi, was reported at the time to have said to Mr. Gandhi words more or less to the same effect—that the basis of British rule in India was neither the consent nor the co-operation

of the people so much as the British force of arms ! The indignation these sentiments roused in the people knew no bounds. Here is a handful of people of alien race, thriving purely on the exploitation of the Indian public, depending for its safety as well as prosperity and domination on the same people's good-sense and good-will, openly and most shamefully parading its superior force. This insulting challenge to its manliness touched the country to the quick. The delicate feelings of the country were thus rudely outraged and the country found a ready, capable and willing champion of its honour in Mr. Gandhi. And under Gandhi's flag it mustered strong.

## iii

It would, we feel, be out of place to detail in this sketch the subsequent events in the country, the starting of the Satyagraha movement, the universal observance of the 6th of April when in every town and village in India *hartal* was declared, all normal activities suspended and the day devoted to prayer and unequivocal and emphatic condemnation of the Government's ungrateful and audacious chal-

lence to the country, the civil disobedience campaign, the perplexity of a bewildered Government, the precipitate action against Mr. Gandhi under the Defence of India Act, the deplorable results thereof culminating in the Delhi riots and the disturbances in the Punjab which a panic-stricken bureaucracy magnified into an open rebellion to afford an excuse for the declaration of Martial Law, the atrocious excesses under Martial Law Rule, the widespread and incessant clamour for an impartial enquiry, the partial condemnation of these excesses by the Hunter Committee which by its stupid procedure shut out non-official evidence of vital importance, the Lords' condonation of the Jallianwallah massacre by General Dyer, the Government's reluctance to punish even the officers condemned in the Majority Hunter Report repudiated by India as being tainted with racial prejudice, and events of a like character. We shall be content with stating briefly what the views are on this question of our friend, Colonel Wedgwood.

Wedgwood traced, as we in India have done, the causes for these outbreaks in the passing of

the lawless laws, in enthroning expediency where justice ought to hold sway. "It is these reasons," he said, "that caused the explosion in India recently." "I do protest," he continued, "and the Government must understand that the repression of these riots by means of bombs from aeroplanes and machine-guns have produced an even worse effect than the original passage of the Rowlatt Act. Now there is not a single moderate Indian but who protests against the way in which these riots have been put down. My right hon. Friend in a passage for which I shall always be grateful compared me lightly to a very important character, Mr. Gandhi, the leader of the Passive Resistance Movement, not only in India, but throughout the world. Mr. Gandhi is regarded as a saint in India. He went to Delhi to suppress the riots. When he got to Delhi he was arrested and sent back. It was the arrest of Mr. Gandhi which caused the revolt at Lahore. It is unfortunate incidents like this which must be inquired into. If peace and settlement are to come to India there will have to be an inquiry into these riots. Why are they so concentrated in Delhi and the Punjab? The Punjab six years

ago was the most peaceful part of India. It is the home of the Sikhs, the best soldiers. The reason is that they have had, obviously, during the last six years some of that firm, resolute rule, which the right hon. Gentleman terms the right method of governing India."

Wedgwood had no doubt in his mind that the responsibility for these most unfortunate events must be laid at the door of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the reactionary and militarist satrap of the Punjab. "Sir Michael O'Dwyer," he said, "six years ago when he went to the Punjab, found it a perfectly quiet country. He has bequeathed it to his successor a revolutionary spirit which runs from one end to the other." Wedgwood then went on to press for an impartial and thorough inquiry into these happenings: "You have got to have not only an enquiry into the murders of English people in India during the last few months, but also into those administrative acts, whether the use of aeroplane bombs or the arrest of men like Mr. Gandhi or the employment of *agents provocateurs* by the police force, before you will get any system of contentment and satisfaction."

The Hunter enquiry, it is now notorious, was neither thorough nor impartial; but it at least helped to bring out some of the worst excesses to the notice of civilisation. In the Commons on July 8th, 1920, the Punjab disturbances with special reference to General Dyer were debated upon. The crawling order, the order to natives to touch the ground with their forehead, the order to them to compose odes on their punisher, the setting up of whipping triangles and the erection of gallows before trials commenced—a sinister anticipation of the issue, recalling the procedure adopted by Napoleon in a notorious case, as Mr. Bennet pointed out in the Commons—these and other atrocities were referred to in the course of the Debate.

Colonel Wedgwood made a most momentous speech on this occasion. The Debate, for the most part, had taken a very narrow turn. It was converted into a question whether the victory in the Division Lobby should lie with the upholders or the opponents of General Dyer. Wedgwood protested against this turn of the

Debate and pointed out forcefully that the issue before the House was not the fortunes of General Dyer, but those of the Empire in the future.\* "I know I am regarded as an anti-patriot in this as in other matters," he said, "as one opposed to the true interests of his own country. Of course, old Members of this House know that that is not so. If ever there was a case in which it behoved those who loved England to speak out, it is this." "Hon. Members have discussed this question of General Dyer," he continued, "as if it only concerned him; but General Dyer was only an incident, a very small incident. What we are discussing, or ought to be discussing, is whether India should remain part of the British Empire or should not. That is the question that I do beg hon. Members to take into account. Do we desire to see the British Empire preserved? If we do, we must remember that it can only be preserved in this case by the co-operation of the Indians, and not by any other means."

Wedgwood then passed on to the crucial question as to Imperial policy—what should be

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\* *Hansard*, 8th July 1920.

the basis on which the Empire ought to be held. "Some are carried away by the idea," he said, "that the safety of Englishmen and women comes first. It does not come first. Every man who went out to France to fight in the war knew perfectly well that their safety and the safety of their relatives and friends was of no importance whatsoever. They knew that the honour of their country came first. I think there is a profound difference between honour and safety. General Dyer no doubt acted as if the safety of Englishmen and women should come first. I think that was the wrong thing to do. It is more important to save the national honour than to save any particular item in the nation." Warming himself up by the very noble ideals of Empire that he set before himself, Wedgwood gave utterance to these noble sentiments: "I would rather, for the interests of our country, that Englishmen and women had been shot down at Jallianwallah by Indians than that Indians had been shot down by Englishmen. After all, lives vanish, but this country and the honour of the country remain for all time. The principal charge I make against him is not that he shot down

Indians, but that he gave to English history the greatest blot that has been placed upon it since in days gone by we burned Joan of Arc."

Wedgwood plainly asked the House to understand that he was not speaking on India's behalf, but was pleading for the sake of England. "I am not speaking from an Indian point of view," he said, "but solely from an English point of view. Where a question of national honour is concerned, we must look at it with English eyes, and I beg hon. Members to realise that by doing this action, General Dyer has injured our honour, and that is his crime. The safety of life is of no importance, the safety of women and children, even, is of no importance compared with the honour of England, and every Member knows that this is so."

Wedgwood did not plead for revenge; "revenge", he said, "is the aim of fools." But he wished that the mentality which approved of the conduct of Dyer should be changed. He deplored the attitude of the Anglo-Indians, both bureaucrats and exploiters. "The worst

thing of all", he said, "is that 80 per cent. of the Anglo-Indians backed General Dyer and were against the Secretary of State. That is what perpetually, and day by day, is making the Indians disturbed, antagonistic, anti-English and Sinn Fein." He then severely criticised the attitude of Sir William Johnson-Hicks and others of his way of thinking who were the mouth-pieces of O'Dwyerism in India, and warned them of the consequences of their action which, he did not hesitate to say, might even lead to the downfall of the British Empire in India. The words of Sir William, he said, "were really the words of Sir Michael O'Dwyer." "He spoke as though," he continued, "the future relationship of the Indian and the English masses were not worth one penny, as though what was of importance was class rule in India. Rule by force by a class should come to an end all over the world."

He wanted to make himself clear. The danger in India was not another Great Indian Mutiny: It was Passive Resistance or, as it is now known, Non-co-operation. "A military uprising", he said, "would

be absolutely impossible in these days of aeroplanes, armoured cars, roads and railways, and wireless telegraphy. Such an uprising would be absolutely impracticable. What we are face to face there is not a military uprising, but simply Passive Resistance. Once you get the people refusing to take part in government, you may carry on for a few years, but in the end you will find yourselves where the Irish Government is to-day—and without an Ulster. You have got this situation before you in India. What are you going to do? Is the only message that the British Parliament has to send to India that the only day on which we discussed Indian affairs was taken up with discussing the rights and wrongs of a British General?"

Obviously, he did not like that England's message to India in that supreme period of affliction should be no more soothing to her but so full of irony, so lacking in words of consolation, encouragement, good cheer and hope for the future. "Every word that is said here to-day will be read in India. We cannot help it, even if we would. To my mind,"

he continued, "every speech ought to be delivered in order that it may appeal to Indians and show them that there are people in England who condemn this affair at Amritsar, condemn the Martial Law. I speak here to-day for thousands of Liberals as well as Labour Members, in saying that we are against the Jallianwallah Bagh murder, against the way in which Martial Law was carried on in the Punjab, against Sir Michael O'Dwyer and against the whole administration of the Punjab."

## v

Wedgwood then proceeded to state what ought to be the goal of British Policy in the dependant parts of the Empire. He said: "The real point is this: Are we to try to carry on the great position we have to-day by the terrorism of subject races? (Hon. Members: "No!") The only alternative that I can see is to invite them to come into the British Empire on equal terms, so that Indians would be British citizens, and have the same rights as Englishmen or Australians. If you give these rights, you give a certain attraction to these people to belong to the British Empire. If you persist

in treating these Indians, not only in India, but, be it observed, in our Colonies, East Africa, South Africa, and elsewhere, as though they were necessarily an inferior people, and not equal to you and me, so long as there is this social feeling against them, so long as they are legally inferior, you are ruining the British Empire and the future cause of our country. I want to see England embracing all these people, not only Indians, but as they come along in the scale of civilisation, the black men of Africa as well as the Jews of Palestine and the Egyptians of Egypt. I want to see them all as being proud of British citizens as the men in the Roman days were proud of being Roman citizens."

"There is nothing finer in the records of Lord Palmerston," he continued, "than the way he stood up for that Gibralter Jew, Don Pacifico. He was a Jew. He was a Gibralter Jew, which is worse. Lord Palmerston made the case a *causus belli* because that man had lost some of his property." "If that is the way you are going to make people proud of being British citizens," he added, "well and good. But so long as you go on treating Indians as though they were bound to be a subject race,

as if those who had the wit, intelligence, and energy to educate themselves were all wicked agitators and people to be condemned, as they were condemned by Sir Michael O'Dwyer in his speech, so long as the only decent Indian is the Indian who is caned and who is content to be your servant, so long as that is the feeling, you are injuring the prospects and the true development of the British Empire."

## vi

It is noteworthy that the Secretary of State's action did not give complete satisfaction to Wedgwood. "I believe that in the blessing he has given in his despatch," he said, "to Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Lord Chelmsford, he has done more to undermine his reforms than anything else he has ever done. We on these benches are not prepared to say that he is correct in blessing Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Lord Chelmsford. We also know in addition," he said, "that the right hon. Gentleman has undone some of his best work. We wish that he had put no such words on paper." "My last message to the right hon. Gentleman is this," he added, "that unless something is

done, and done quickly, to put into the hands of Indians, not only the legislative power, but the administrative power to deal with these questions of law and order, which have been so mishandled by the military, unless you give the people power to repeal the Seditious Meetings Act and to restore to them the Magna Charta and freedom which we enjoy in this country, unless this is done, all the right hon. Gentleman's great reforms, from which we all hoped so much, will fall into the fire of racial hate, which will destroy not only India's chances of freedom but the whole future of the British race."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE KHILAFAT QUESTION.

One other question which has agitated India profoudly, especially Muslim India, is the Khilafat question ; and we propose to give in this chapter Colonel Wedgwood's views on that question. The propping up of a tottering and effete Turkey to the detriment of its subject nationalities is to all a delicate question ; it is a peculiarly ticklish one to a British Liberal schooled for a fairly long period in the school of the followers of Gladstone. Wedgwood's strength of will and independence to depart from Party traditions, born of his supreme anxiety to maintain the reputation of his country for justice, fair-play and honourable conduct, however, led him to espouse, to the extent that his stern ideals permitted, the claims of the Indian Muslims in regard to the preservation of their Khilafat intact.

Turkey. For one thing, Wedgwood felt that in regard to the whole peace settlement, the Allies had fallen away from the high pedestal from which they talked in justification of their entering upon the War. "The militarists in every country," he said, "instead of accepting the Peace as the end of the War, have determined to turn the Peace of Paris into a lasting, a just and durable war throughout the world. They have made their arrangements in Russia and elsewhere. The Peace which is being made in Paris is not the Peace for which I fought or for which the majority of English people fought in this War. We fought for the Fourteen Points of President Wilson, but we have not got a peace on those lines. It has been changed and twisted by the interests concerned, the military and the diplomatic interests at Paris, till we have got reconstructed before our eyes upon the basis of the just Fourteen Points a peace such as was perpetrated by the Great Powers 104 years ago."

"I will not hold myself responsible for that sort of peace," he continued. "The Saar-

Valley is an injustice. The occupation of the left bank of the Rhine is an injustice. The non-self-determination of the border district of Poland and Prussia is an injustice. The dismemberment of the purely Turkish parts of the Turkish Empire is another injustice." "All these are contrary to the terms of the Armistice as they were understood by both sides," added Wedgwood, "and any peace that is formed on injustice can never be maintained by a League of Nations. It is impossible to have a League of Nations which is a true basis of the international brotherhood of the future if it has to maintain a settlement which is unjust. These people who led us on to fight for the destruction of Imperialism and militarism and injustice have taken advantage of the enthusiasm they aroused. At the end, they have tied up the people in the old bonds, and will preserve the opportunity for the wars they need in the future.\*

ii

From what we have seen before, it is perhaps easy to guess at the course which

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\* *Hansard*, 8th June 1919.

Wedgwood would like to have been adopted by Britain in regard to Turkey. The fundamental principles by which he regulated his views on particular questions were, firstly, the honour of his country, and, secondly, the great democratic principle of self-determination. On the 26th February 1920, on a motion for adjournment in the Commons, the question as whether the Turks should not be driven away from Constantinople bag and baggage was fully debated upon. The Prime Minister justified the rejection of the bag and baggage policy. He was attacked in this policy by Lord Robert Cecil, Sir Donald Maclean, the Officiating Leader of the Independent Liberal Party, and others. The supporters of the Prime Minister, some of them, supported him on the ground that his policy should be adopted in the interests of the safety of the British Empire, "an argument," said Wedgwood, "which would not move me on any occasion." "The safety of the British Empire," he said, "looks afteritself. I support this policy on the ground of the honour of the British Empire, which is quite a sufficient argument for taking any line of policy in foreign affairs. The declaration of the Prime Minis-

ter in January 1918, sealed the question so far as I am concerned. He there promised that the Turks should not be turned out of Constantinople. He promised not to the Turks and Austrians alone, not, as the noble Lord the Member for Hitchin (Lord Robert Cecil) suggests, as a matter which would depend upon the subsequent action of Turkey or Austria, but it was a pledge to our Muslim follow-subjects in this Empire. It is true that I do not suppose that the passing of that pledge and the making of that speech affected one whit either the bravery of those men in the field or even the members who enlisted in India to join the Service; but even if it affected one solitary individual, it is of the utmost importance that what we have said we must stick to, and though it may have had little effect in the past, it would have a terrific effect upon our reputation in the future if it began to be realised all over the eastern parts of our Empire that a speech which has been interpreted as a solemn pledge should have been cast aside and overthrown at the instance of an agitation in this country.”\*

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\* *Hansard*, 20th February, 1920.

Wedgwood then repudiated the charge that the Turks in warfare were far more cruel than the other nations who fought us. The House had been asked to support the bag and baggage policy "for the sake of those who had been wounded and killed at Gallipoli." "All of us who fought in Gallipoli," he said, "were without any particular quarrel with the Turks. We were fighting with the Turks against our wishes, because behind the Turk stood the German. It was Germany we were fighting, and Turks were unfortunate enough to be in the way. Moreover, we who fought there know perfectly well that the conduct of the Turks towards the wounded and towards the prisoners, even in Gallipoli, was infinitely better than the treatment meted out to the wounded by the Germans in the French fields of war."

Wedgwood then went on to point out that the agitation on the European side "has behind it also the peculiar religious animosity of the Middle Ages, which it should be our duty in the twentieth century to stamp out." He seems to have suspected at first at any rate that the Indian agitation too was not altogether

free from the taint of religious fanaticism, for, contrasting the agitation of the Congress and other deputations, which "persuaded" Englishmen rather than "threatened" them, with the Khilafat agitation, he said: "It would be infinitely better from the Muslim point of view, both now and in future, if they, too, would appeal to instincts which are common to us both, instead of imagining that threats will ever get their way." "An agitation carried on with reason," he continued, "is one thing; an agitation carried on with threats is a very different thing, and we in this House, and Englishmen generally, are much more likely to look after the interest of our Muslim fellow-subjects in the Empire if we believe they share our view as to what is right, and not that we are nervous as to what their attitude may be in future. The agitation on both sides is an objectionable, a fanatical religious squabble. To me it is a matter of utter indifference whether St. Sophia is a Muslim or a Christian church. What I see before me in this decision is simply this. The British Prime Minister laid down in a solemn declaration that the Turks should not be swept out of Constantinople. That ought to be

enough not only for the Muslims but for every hon. Member in this House."

## iii

After coming in close contact with the Indian Khilafat Delegation, subsequently, Wedgwood had a better and more sympathetic understanding of the aims and objects of the Deputation. The Deputation wanted to use no threats ; and as Mr. Muhammad Ali explained, on his return from his European tour, with more significance than appeared on the surface, the Deputation used no "threats." They wanted self-determination to be applied, not under artificial, coercive conditions, after a period of occupation in which the Muslims may have been extirpated or coerced into submission, but under natural conditions, which would allow of independent, impartial judgment by the community whom self-determination is meant to benefit. Wedgwood realised the justice of this plea ; and in a meeting arranged to support the Khilafat Delegation, he made a speech favouring self-determination . in a manner which did not please his Liberal friends. If there were to be

mandates—he thought it would be better to have them perhaps—then, their operation was to be confined to 25 years. If they were given the opportunity of remaining within or outside the Empire, they would become attached to the Empire. “These mandates over territories which are becoming civilised,” he said, “are very ticklish subjects. I am quite certain the best way of perpetuating the connection with this country is by making it a free connection which the other side may break at any time.” He concluded by reminding the House that good government is no substitute for self-government.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE INDIAN BUDGET.

The annual Parliamentary Debate on the “East India Revenue Accounts”, as the Indian Budget Debate in the Commons is known generally, is, as Colonel Wedgwood himself has said once, “a field day for India”; and that is in most years the one occasion perhaps on which reference is freely made to all sorts of Indian affairs when occasion requires as, in their opinion it seldom does, by friends as well as by the enemies of India in Parliament. Those speeches, it is notorious, are addressed, not to the august House directly—the benches on the Treasury side as well as on the Opposition are as a rule empty on such occasions, it being generally agreed that the rulings of the Secretary of State and the Government of India could not but be right and at least proper for India—as to the patient Press Gallery which transcribes them for the benefit of India. And it must certainly be of interest to us to see the nature of the speeches that our friend the gallant Colonel made on

these occasions : and we shall therefore refer to one or two of these.

## i

Wedgwood began to take an interest in India almost as soon as he entered Parliament. Imbued with the highest traditions of liberty, fully recognising the duty of an M. P. not merely to his constituency in the narrow sense, but to the nation at large, Wedgwood tackled the Indian problem early in his Parliamentary career. In those troublous times of 1907 and the two or three years following, when the Indian bureaucracy had, true to Curzonian traditions, entered on a vigorous policy of ruthless repression, Wedgwood boldly raised his protest in Parliament. In those days, as now, repression went hand in hand with reform ; and by a strange irony of fate, Lords Minto and Morley made themselves the instruments of this double-faced policy. Wedgwood, then as now, questioned the wisdom of this policy. He made a long Budget speech taking advantage of the "field day" for India, in the course of which he made a spirited attack on the Indian bureaucracy, severely

criticising its policy of shackling, if not gagging, the Press, restricting the movements of Indian publicists and not seldom depriving them of their liberties by penning them up by means of *letters de catchet*. He pointed out there was no freedom of speech in India, no freedom of the Press, no personal and civil liberties. And he concluded by making an impassioned appeal to his countrymen to cease to be un-British and by urging on the Government of His Majesty to declare their policy towards India. It is regrettable to note that it took a decade for his appeal to bear fruit. The announcement about the goal of British policy in India was made only on the 20th August 1920. That, however, was not Wedgwood's fault.

## ii

We shall perhaps do well to refer to one more or two of his field day orations. In his Budget speech for 1918, Wedgwood, after stating that perhaps, if worked properly, the Reforms Report Scheme might give to India a genuine first step towards responsible government, gave an acute criticism of the financial

arrangements in the Report. "The transfer of the Land Revenue to the provincial Councils is not only natural, but gives them a large source of revenue which can be dealt with in future as Land Revenue increases. The retention by the Central Government of Income-tax also seems to me to be obvious, but I do rather criticise the way in which they have made up the revenue of the Government of India. By this transfer of Land Revenue to the provincial councils, a large hole has been made in the revenue of the Government of India, and they have proposed that each presidency or governorship should hand back to the Government a certain sum of money. They admit this system has been difficult to decide, but the system they have adopted seems most unfair. One-third of the whole amount to be handed back by the local Government to the Central Government comes from Madras, because in the Madras Presidency—I am not certain about this, but the right hon. Gentleman will correct me—a far larger proportion of the revenue for land tax is collected; because the Land in Madras is owned by the State, and the rents.

are paid to the State Government. But if you go to Bengal that only contributes one-fourth of what Madras contributes, although Bengal is far richer. The reason is that there you have the land held under the Permanent Settlement by which a land-lord takes the benefit and the State gets next to nothing. The Madras Government has to hand over to the Government of India three or four times as much as is handed over by the great province of Bengal. That does not seem fair in the long run. Some adjustment will have to be made there so that Madras and the Central Provinces will come off rather better and not suffer for the benefit of others because they have an intelligent system of land tenure in that part of the country." In his latter part of the speech, we see the hand of the President of the Land Values Taxation League, but they are none the less little open to question.

It is not merely the financial relations between the Central Government and the provincial Governments that Wedgwood tackled in this speech. He also referred to the most important question of the borrowing powers of

these Governments. His criticisms of the Report proposals in regard to this matter were equally, if not more, shrewd. "The other question connected with finance is that of loans. I am not satisfied that my right hon. Friend is right in preventing the provincial Governments from applying for loans upon the markets like other provincial Governments." "Why should I not be entitled to invest my money in Saskatchewan," he exclaimed, "and not in the United Provinces Loan or the Madras Loan?" He then analysed the reasons given for the restrictions and found them susceptible of sinister designs. "The reasons given are," he said, "that there would be competition in borrowing and the market would be dislocated. These reasons are very poor and they apply to all the provinces and towns in the British Empire just as much as to India, and I cannot help thinking, with my suspicious mind, this has been done in order to leave a certain amount of administrative control in the hands of the Central Government." "The Central Government have no right to say what money the provincial Governments shall borrow," he

continued, "whether for irrigation, sanitation or public works of any kind, and if you think the Central Government ought to have power to interfere in these things, provide it openly in your charter, and do not do it surreptitiously by leaving it to the Central Government to say what moneys the provincial Government shall be allowed to borrow." "It is just these little things," he rightly added, "showing lack of confidence, which are likely to do harm to the working of this scheme. I hope the House and my right hon. Friend will not be disappointed if the scheme does not work admirably." To those who have carefully read the Government of India despatches on the reform proposals, the criticism will not come as a surprise. They know that the Government of India, deprived of the legislative and direct control over the provincial Governments, sought to get administrative control over them by creating central inspecting agencies in all departments with right of advice which has the force of law almost to the local Governments. This attempt to get round the provisions of the Act, however, fortunately failed. Col. Wedgwood concluded his speech with a fine

peroration calling upon Government not to treat agitation as disloyalty and thus resort to repression and goad people on to bitterness.

## iii

On Thursday, May 22nd, 1919, Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State, in making the customary motion in presenting the East India Accounts to the Committee of the whole House of Commons "that the Speaker do now leave the Chair," made a speech, containing as usual a more or less comprehensive survey of the Indian situation. Col. Wedgwood made a speech in the course of the Debate that followed. He began his remarkable speech by enunciating the goal of British policy in India. Dr. E. Hopkinson, who had visited India as Member of the Industrial Commission, made a most reactionary speech, questioning the need for political reforms in India and "begging" the Government of India and the Secretary of State "to take into consideration that it is more important to feed the hungry than to give them political rights, that it is more important to clothe the naked than to invest them with political doctrines and dogmas, and that it is more

important to educate the people to be able to vote than it is to give them the vote." We shall not pause to examine the dicta of this sapient critic who, it must be presumed, knows that it is just because that after a hundred and fifty years of British rule, the people remain as helpless in the matter of food and clothing as ever perhaps, political rights are to be granted to them to rectify this disastrous state of things. We shall be content with the brief observation of Wedgwood on the point. "The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down," he said, "has contributed a very interesting speech to this Debate, but I am shocked to find that he is such a gross materialist. He regards the improvement of industrial conditions as the end and aim of all our political action, whereas I regard freedom as being the ultimate object of British Rule in India." After this preliminary remark, Wedgwood passed on to consider the details of the Budget, a rare thing in the Commons. "This Debate is a field day for India," he said, "but it is also a special debate upon the Indian Budget, and I regret to see that not one word has been said about the Budget." He then went on to "mention one

or two facts about it" which indeed were an epitome of Indian public opinion on Indian Budgets. It is well that we set down here his views on this important matter.

The large sums raised in the country in comparison with its national income, the disproportionately and cruelly heavy military expenditure, the neglect of such development departments as agriculture, irrigation and education, the undue pampering of the Railway services, the absence of all real control over public expenditure by the representatives of the public—all these defects and more of the Indian financial system received his attention. "The Budget was to raise £124,000,000—a very large advance on previous years. £43,750,000 of it is allocated to the Army—about twice what the Army bill was before the war. Nor is that all. In that figure is not included any appropriation for this new war in Afghanistan. The ordinary expenditure of the Army has risen from twenty odd millions to forty odd millions. Another thing is observable. The vote for the police has risen very largely.

You have now £6,250,000 devoted to the police force, which is still extremely badly paid and extremely ignorant, and which, owing to the Defence of the Realm Act and Rowlatt Bill Extensions of that Act, has been brought into intimate contact with all the progressive, intelligent elements in Indian society. There is an enormous increase in these two things." "But education," he continued, "which is the key to real progress in India, both electorally and industrially, gets £4,000,000 against the police £6,250,000." Wedgwood then compared expenditure on irrigation with that on railways. "When we come to irrigation, which is essential to agricultural development," he said, "you find £4,000,000 voted, although the irrigation system already in operation are bringing in £5,500,000 to the inland revenue. But when you come to railways, you find that no less than £24,000,000 out of £124,000,000 are devoted to railway extensions, a bigger programme than before the war. Irrigation comes before railways, and the production of wealth before the transporting of that wealth, and it would have been more advisable, if India had been

the only thing to be considered, that capital expenditure should have been devoted to irrigation rather than to this enormous railway programme; £23,000,000 out of the £24,000,000 are ear-marked and devoted to the purchase of railway material in Great Britain. Irrigation money will be spent in India. Railway development means money spent in this country at a time when railway material is extremely expensive, and at a time when it is possible to buy up our scrapped railways from France and other theatres of war at a price which would be extremely remunerative to the British Government."

Wedgwood contrasted this un-Indian Budget with what it might be under Indian regime. "The whole of the Budget bears witness to the fact," he said, "that it is one passed by Englishmen in India and not one to which the Indian people would agree. If they had control of their own finance what a different Budget we should see—I think a Budget which would in the long run find more money for irrigation, more for education, and for the genuine development of that country, and less for expenditure on matters which really are

Imperial or British in their character, and which must give rise to the feeling that, in spite of all our brave words, the Government of that country is directed rather towards the interests of this Island than to the interests of the country where the money is raised by people who have worked hard to find it." He concluded this part of his speech by pointing out the need for giving India control over her purse which, he held, had not been given to India under the Reform proposals because by the process of reservation all important departments where there was scope for economy had been removed from within the purview of the legislature. After condemning the franchise proposals and the Rowlat laws, he concluded his peroration as follow: "If full administration of your (reform) scheme is left to the dispossessed bureaucratic class in India, then you will have failed, and just as in the Punjab, the action of one particular bureaucrat embittered the relations between two great peoples, so a particular bureaucrat in directing these legislative councils, may, by stupid, tactless action, destroy the possibility of India becoming, not merely a member of

this family of nations but one of the freest and most loyal members of the lot." No truer words were ever uttered and no statement ever made which had a more earnest ring of sincerity in it.

## CHAPTER IX

### BRITAIN AND INDIA.

On that memorable day, August 20, 1917, the Secretary of State for India made the following announcement in the House of Commons:

"The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps should be taken as soon as possible....

"I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be the judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility..."

It is unnecessary for our purposes to dilate on the reasons which led to the making of this momentous announcement. The date on which it was announced is self-explanatory. When the War was declared and the need for India's co-operation arose, Lord

Hardinge's Government felt that unless the goal of British policy in India was to be defined as that of self-government, there were little prospects of rousing India into the fullest enthusiasm to prosecute the War to a successful issue. They had therefore submitted, in consultation with the local Governments, certain proposals for Indian reform. What with the pre-occupations of the War or with the reluctance to take such a keenly controversial subject as the Indian Reform question was bound to prove to be, the Secretary of State deferred consideration of the question at the time and the Hardinge Despatch was shelved. The War, however, reached a most critical stage when British resources, taxed to the full, were found insufficient for the conduct of the War; and India had to be tapped to the full. This, Lord Chelmsford found, would be impossible unless something in the nature of reforms was promised to India. The result was the announcement of August 1920.

## i

In pursuance of this announcement the Secretary of State visited India, the year

following and, along with the Viceroy, toured throughout the country, consulting local Governments and representative Indians and Europeans as well as political and commercial bodies. The result of these enquiries and consultations was the now famous Montagu—Chemsford Report. This Report caused some satisfaction to the country and Englishmen of the Liberal persuasion welcomed it heartily. We shall not go into the details of this Report. Suffice it to say that it contemplated to confer something like responsible government in the provinces in regard to certain departments such as education and local self-government with provision to extend the operation of such system to other departments gradually and as experience proved that they might satisfactorily be so transferred. There was to be an enlarged legislature on an elective basis both in the provinces and in the Central Government. Above all, the Report was full of fine sentiments as to the future of British policy in India.

The Report met with more or less support in the country. The Liberals were enthusiastic

over it; and Wedgwood fully shared this enthusiasm. Speaking of this Report in the Commons, he said, after wishing that there was in it a little more of Liberalism and a little less of caution: "The Report which we have had put into our hands recently, and which some of us have read, is an historical document of the first importance. It is Lord Durham's Report upon the Government of Canada combined with the constitution of the Abbé Sieyés. It has embodied in its pages, particularly in that section to which the right hon. Gentleman has just referred, the true doctrine of historic Liberalism. If this Debate does nothing else but bring to the notice of the people of this country this document and induce them to study and read it, it will have served a very useful purpose. I am exceptionally grateful to the Secretary of State for India for having produced this historical document. It is a great credit to this country. I have a telegram to-day from a desperate, dangerous Indian agitator—Lala Lajpat Rai. His telegram begins: 'The general spirit of the Montagu Report is admirable.' That is the unbiassed opinion of

everybody who reads the Report. The tone of it so excellent. Hitherto, English people have been rightly suspected," he continued, "of hypocrisy in dealing with India. Too often they have made professions purely for platform purposes, while executive action has been very different."

He went on to illustrate his point by reference to concrete illustrations. He said: "Take the case of education. There has been, very rightly, a suspicion on the part of Indian people that we have deliberately prevented them from getting education in order that they might not claim self-government. Another very well-founded suspicion of our rule is that we have deliberately divided the people in order that they might be better controlled, and that we have used the excuse of Muhammadan and Hindu in order to prevent self-government." Wedgwood is a stern opponent of the Machiavellian principle of *divide et impera*. He was therefore greatly impressed with the opposition in the Report to communal representation. "When I point to the tone of this Report, I should

like to refer specifically to those passages dealing with the question of the electorate and the question of the representation of minorities. It would have been so easy for the old stereotyped official to have produced a report calculated to persuade all save the ignorant reader that the British Government, in the true interests of the minorities in India, and not at all considering the advantages of British control, felt it to be essential to provide separate representation for all the different castes and communities of that country. I suspected that would be done, that we should have class representation in order that the British Government, playing the Machiavellian game, sought to play off one caste and one religion against the other, one interest against the other. The genuineness and the honesty of this Report is shown by the very fact that the whole arguments of the Report are directed against separate representations, and that the Report is based on the genuine desire to see India become a nation where all classes would pull together, and where the natural distinctions in politics would be between Liberals and Conservatives and not between two castes."

Wedgwood's opposition to communal representation was not based on doctrinaire grounds. He had, as we have learnt, some experience of Africa where there was something like communal representation. He was therefore qualified to give the House "the real advantage of having a uniform electorate. We have in the British Empire," he said, "already two systems. In South Africa we have the system of the black man having a vote for the ordinary election. In nearly every constituency in Cape Colony the black men have votes, and consequently, the white members elected for these constituencies have to look after the native interest. They dare not oppress the blacks because the blacks have votes for them, and you get fair treatment of the blacks in Cape Colony in consequence. The black minority, because it is only a small minority, gets its right and receives decent treatment."

Wedgwood then went on to point out the dangers of the opposite arrangement. "But if you go to New Zealand," he said, "you see exactly the opposite arrangement. The

Maoris are represented by Maoris ; they do not vote for white Members of Parliament ; they have three or four Maori representatives to look after their interests. They are easily corrupted ; they are bought over ; they are helpless in a white system, with the result that the position of the Maoris, where they have separate representation, is infinitely worse than the blacks in South Africa where they vote for white men.” If separate representation was thought absolutely essential, he said, the communities to which such representation was granted should be still left on the general list so that they may have an equal power with any other community in voting for the ordinary Members of Parliament, so that all the communities may finally coalesce in ordinary political relations.

He laid great emphasis on securing “the widest possible franchise for the Legislative Council” ; for, he said : “If you have a wide franchise everything else will follow in due course. What one is afraid of is the narrowing down of the franchise before everything else. Once you have got your elected

majority on the Legislative Council everything else must naturally follow as night follows day or day follows night."

So much for the constitution of these councils under the Report. What about their powers? In the beginning, it must be said, he had a great fascination for the scheme, though this fascination, we must add, was subject to the reflection that the arrangement into transferred and reserved powers was to be necessarily temporary. "It is impossible," he said, "to carry on permanently with an irremovable Executive and a legislative assembly elected by a popular electorate to which they are not responsible; you can only manage it temporarily on such a basis. Still it is an extraordinarily clever way of dealing with the matter by means of transferred subjects and the gradual reduction in amount of the reserved subjects. The Government was not prepared, as I should have been, to do away with the irremovable Executive at once, and to say that they would have Cabinet responsibility and that the Legislative Council should choose the Ministry who should

be the executive authority. Rather they said they would have a certain number of ministers should come from the legislative council and be responsible for the transferred subjects. That may do for a time. Gradually, as the transferred subjects increase and the reserved subjects are reduced, you will get an Executive which will be responsible to the elective legislative council. That will be self-government." He then criticised the financial arrangements which criticism we have already set forth elsewhere.

Wedgwood concluded his observations on the Report with a warning. He asked Government not to adopt the foolish policy of repression along with reform. "It is of the utmost importance," he said, "that we should have no whittling away of this Report." There would be agitations against the Report to see that it was not whittled down. "Do not let us start by making the mistake of thinking," he said, "that anyone who agitates for an extension of the scheme is thereby an enemy of the State, a fit subject for deportation, hostile to British rule, and all the rest of

it. If once we allow legitimate agitation for the extension of self-government to be made a ground for charges of disloyalty, we shall set up in the happy relations which there ought to be between England and India, all the bitterness which we have in Ireland and which we would do anything to avoid now that we are all struggling together in the common cause of liberty." To the people of India too, he had a word of encouragement. "I hope the people of India will realise," he said, "that this charter is the foundation upon which their liberties can be based. I hope also that they will not imagine that I am actuated by the desire to be kind to India or to give them anything. I support this scheme, not in the interests of India in the least, it is immaterial to me how they govern themselves—but in the interests of England, in the interests of her good name and her good traditions."

## iii

The publication of the Report on the Indian Constitutional Reforms and its subsidiary Reports such as those of the Southborough and the Feetham Reports was the signal for

the emergence of no less than three or four Parliamentary Groups pledged to forward the passage of the Bill on lines which the interests they represented wanted it to be passed. The Report fixed the maximum of concessions to Indian aspirations ; it fixed no minimum : and the Parliamentary Groups referred to came into being to get the line of concessions fixed at the levels at which they wanted them to be fixed.

There was the Extreme Right, composed of Col. Yate and others of the Sydenham gang who wanted to wreck the Bill, if possible, but at any rate to get it whittled down as much as possible. The Indo-British Association was the mentor of this group. There was then the Right, composed of such men as Sir J. D. Rees and others who had vested interests, but who knew the danger of continuing things as they are and who therefore wanted to get the Bill passed in such a way that, while it will not be dangerously unsatisfactory to India, it will not appreciably affect their vested interests. These people wanted to stoop to conquer. There was the Right Centre,

represented by such people as Lord Carmichael, Mr. T. J. Bennet, Mr. H. E. A. Cotton and others whose anxiety was to inspire and support the Indian Moderate Party. These wanted to see that the Report scheme was not seriously whittled down. We discerned two more groups, one of them the Left Centre, that of the moderate Extremists, if they may be so called, inspired by Mrs. Besant and worked immediately by Major David Graham Pole, which stood for the unwhittled scheme plus some control over the Central Government, and the other, the Left, which was presided over by Mr. Wedgwood and which drew its inspiration from or lent its support to the Indian National Congress Delegation under Mr. Tilak. We are of course concerned only with the last-mentioned, for, it was with that that Mr. Wedgwood was connected. Mr. Wedgwood was the body and soul of that Committee and we shall presently see the work it succeeded in achieving. The path of those M.P's., who, with a sense of duty and generosity which bespeaks of their greatness, came to our aid, was not one strewn with roses. There were difficulties in the way which had but just begun

to loom themselves in their proper perspective. It is necessary to appreciate these difficulties to judge of the work of Wedgwood and his colleagues; and of these we shall presently speak.

## iv

The difficulties which the Indian reform movement had to encounter were admirably summarised by Colonel Wedgwood in an interview he granted to Mr. St. Nihal Singh.\* "The opposition to reform in India will come," said Colonel Wedgwood to that Indian journalist, "from interested parties within the House and the interest they represent outside the House. You know that there is a considerable and influential class in this country that hitherto has monopolised nearly all the high posts in all the civil public services in India and has kept Indians altogether out of the commissioned ranks in the Army. You may rest assured that this class will do its utmost to bring every possible pressure to bear upon Parliament to preserve its monopoly as far as the present circumstances will permit that monopoly to be preserved."

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\* *Commonsense*, April, 1919.

After a moment's pause, Colonel Wedgwood added: "A far greater menace to Indian reform than even this determined and influential class is another class which under the system of government which existed in India before and after the Indian Mutiny, has been able to establish its control over Indian finances, over almost all the Indian commerce, over much of the mineral ore and other raw materials, and over practically all the large industries that at present exist in India."

"Your people," continued Colonel Wedgwood, "are constantly complaining of the spokes that the Indian Civil Service men put into the wheel of Indian progress. But they seem to be oblivious of the greatest danger that to my mind looms ahead of them. Believe me, real opposition that they will have to encounter will not come from the Indian Civil Service men, though I do not for a moment underrate that opposition, but from commercial and financial interests which are far more influential and far better organised than any public service is or can be."

With great earnestness he went on to say: "Any one who knows aught about what is going on in the world to-day, realises that an intensified industrial and commercial scramble is about to take the place of the sanguinary struggle that has just ceased. India is unfortunate enough to possess almost unlimited quantities of a large variety of industrial products for which industrialists here and elsewhere hanker. You can be quite sure that any provision in the forthcoming Bill that in the least degree threatens the financial, commercial and industrial monopoly that our people at present enjoy in India will be fought tooth and nail. The Indian issue ultimately comes to this: whether Indians are to be given the opportunity to fashion India materially, morally and spiritually as they wish to or not. Therefore, the success or failure of Indian reform depends in my judgment upon the measure of success that crowns the efforts of persons who hold in the hollow of their hands the banking facilities, the commerce and raw materials of India to water down Indian reforms."

Speaking with great earnestness, Colonel Wedgwood declared to Mr. Singh that the greatest pitfall that India had to avoid was special representation to financial and industrial and commercial interests. He looked with great alarm at the agitation that the men connected with the Chambers of Commerce in India and their friends in England were making to have so many places on the new Indian Councils earmarked for them. "That would not do," he said, "India wants no Manchester slums and exploitation. Indian capitalists are as dangerous as the British."

Furthermore, Colonel Wedgwood was dead against special representation being given to landlords or even to universities. "Let India beware," he declared, "of the expansion of communal representation which she will find as a mill-stone hanging about her neck which will grow heavier as time goes on."

When the attention of Col. Wedgwood was called to the refusal of Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford to give the Indians even an iota of control over the Central Government which will

in any case continue to spend the bulk of the revenues gathered in India, which will continue to exercise complete control over national finance, currency, tariffs, all-India railways, telegraphs, telephones, post and other means of communication, and which will largely determine, by its policies and administration, the industrial and commercial progress in India, he said :

“ As far as I am concerned, I believe that India is much entitled to make her own tariffs as Canada or any other community within the Empire. I am a staunch free-trader, but if India wants to be a protectionist I certainly would not stop her from being given the right to adopt that policy if she so chooses. If India wants to go to the dogs in that way, I would let her do so. Of one thing I am confident, and that is that nations like individuals, learn only by making mistakes. The more you seek to protect nations and individuals the flabbier they get, and the less able to protect themselves. India must make her own mistakes and learn wisdom from these mistakes.”

“ Could you tell me, Colonel Wedgwood,” Mr. Singh asked, “ something about the men who

you expect will help you in the attempt to widen the scope of Indian reforms? Are they all Labour men, or can you count upon others as well?"

"No. They are not all Labour men," he replied. "The Indian Parliamentary Committee that we formed the other day has the co-operation of several Liberals like myself though it is mainly composed of Labour Members of Parliament. There are, for instance, Mr. Sydney Arnold and Major Barnes, both staunch Liberals, the former a great authority on finance and the latter keenly interested in land valuation. My friends, Mr. Ben Spoor and Mr. J. Swan, both miners' representatives, are men of education and culture. One of them, I think, went to the Ruskin College, Oxford, and the other was at Cambridge."

Col. Wedgwood is not the man to be cowed down by difficulties. The following incident narrated by Mr. Singh illustrates his undaunted and extreme buoyancy of spirit: "A mutual friend who is using all his influence to back up

the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme came up and said that though the Indians have every right to expect a much more liberal measure of reform he was extremely afraid that Wedgwood's amendments might imperil Indian reform. He expressed the belief that the amendments moved by the Left would give the Right an excuse for moving amendments, and that while the Left would not be able to carry out its amendments, the Right would, with the result that the Bill may be altered altogether out of shape. Colonel Wedgwood told him that the Right needed no such excuse and that in any case, it would do all in its power to water down the reforms and that so far as he could see, the only chance of keeping the Right from having any everything its own way was for the Left to move its own amendments." The remark makes one feel that the Colonel at his business is not likely to be influenced by timid men.

It is characteristic of Wedgwood that he would accept a defeat with as much good humour as he would a success. He is reported to have said: "I would not be at all inconsolable if the Indian Constitutional Reform was held

up rather than see a Bill pass that would give India nothing or next to nothing. The present Government and the present House will not last for ever." These words of Colonel Wedgwood are exceedingly significant: when Labour comes to rule, then be our one chance. We shall see in a subsequent chapter how the Colonel made good his words.

## CHAPTER X

### FROM LIBERAL TO LABOURITE.

In the middle of April 1920 or thereabouts, Colonel Wedgwood dramatically left the Party with which from the beginning of his Parliamentary career he had been connected—the Liberal Party—and enrolled himself as a Member of the Handley branch of the Labour Party. It is a tribute to his progressive tendencies and the confidence that he inspired in his constituency that in the Liberal landslide during the preceding year General Election he was one of the few Liberals who were fortunate in getting themselves returned. From a progressive Radical to a constitutional Labourite, the transition is not abrupt; and in Colonel Wedgwood's case, the transition which occurred was not surprising. The immediate cause for this "defection" on his part, as the Liberal Party must have felt it, was a speech of Mr. Asquith; but that was only the immediate cause, the last straw, as it were, that broke the camel's back. Deep down behind it there were several other causes,

some of them personal, but more the Liberal Party's bankruptcy in statesmanship suited to the times. It is perhaps well that we make a passing reference to these causes.

## i

Although Wedgwood, as we saw, belonged to a middle class bourgeoisie, if not indeed a "capitalistic," family, he had imbibed the lessons of his grandfather who rose to the position of a captain of industry out of very humble beginnings. He knew by instinct, as it were, the difficulties, the merits and the weaknesses of artisans: he had an abundant amount of understanding sympathy for them. He was, further, by temperament and by his reading and study of economics and democratic politics, a Radical of Radicals; his connection, from the earliest period of his public life, with the Land Values Taxation League of which many Labour M. P.'s were members, provided to him an opportunity to come in contact with and understand and sympathise with Labour politics. His experience of Africa, his holding a magistracy there, did not make him, as such experiences make Anglo-Indians, an arrogant Nawab.

In the recent War, he came in contact with men of many nationalities, the coloured Indians included; he fought shoulder to shoulder with them; and democrat that he was, his new experiences made him a super-democrat. While thus personal predilections were driving Wedgwood towards a more perfect democracy with a more just and equitable distribution of power and prosperity, his Party's failures and its rapid reduction to a moribund condition, due to the absence of the operation of the dynamic principle and consequent stagnation, only tended to goad him out of it.

Since the outbreak of the War, the Liberal Party has received more than one severe shock. Despite the democratic coating that it received in the days of Gladstone and Chamberlain, the Party had not really shed its whiggism altogether. Its leaders were the old "gentlemen" in a new garb, condescending to sacrifice their cultured leisure in the patriotic duty of taking to politics. Its methods were quiet considerateness, suavity of manners, classical correctness of conduct. It lacked

originality of conception, promptness of action, resoluteness of purpose; its vices were inanition which passed for caution, vacillation which passed for deliberation, lethargy which passed for steadiness. It was bankrupt in idea, in policy, in programme, in methods of speedy and effective execution. Fine phrases and flowery catch-words, the products of Oxford and Cambridge, had, however, had their days and had to yield place to rough and ready action, action which had even to refuse to count its cost. Asquith was no doubt a loveable peace Premier; and his fall was felt by many to be a tragic event. But, as it was inevitable, Mr. Lloyd George's ascendancy was received with acclamation and relief; for, people felt that a man of action with the necessary dash and driving power was what was required and not a scholarly, dignified, "gentleman" Premier who, if he gained respect, lacked the reputation for necessary resoluteness of purpose and for energetic action. Hence Mr. George's success.

## ii

The "defection" of Mr. George from the Asquithian leadership was followed by the

defection of others; and the Liberal Party received the first shock since the War in the formation of the George Coalition. At first magnificently advertised by the *Times* and more magnificently received by the public, the Coalition's charms were, however, lost on the public at the close of the War when the country emerged with crushing burdens and with a militarist tendency in the Ministry which further increased those burdens. With a subservient Parliament at its back, the Coalition had its own autocratic way despite the immense volume, day by day gaining strength, of public opinion against it. Its strength lay, not so much in the personal followers of Mr. Lloyd George, the Coalition Liberals, but in the Unionist Party which had as a whole joined the Coalition and which in fact almost dominated British policy at many points. Under the influence of this clique of Unionists—the Carson-cum-Sir George Younger clique—Mr. Lloyd George adopted a foreign and a domestic policy which has turned out to be most unpopular. In regard to the domestic policy, under the Unionist-Capitalist ascendancy, you have a most extravagant financial policy which

is fast leading the country, as many believe, along the road to bankruptcy. By the same ascendancy, Labour feels that it is not impartially treated and the result is periodical strikes of a very widespread and disastrous character. The Government have no well-defined and principled Labour policy and it continues its precarious existence by a process of shameful higgling. The Carsonist ascendancy in the Cabinet of which the rebellious Ulsterite, Mr. F. E. Smith, now Lord Birkenhead, is Lord Chancellor, precludes the possibility of a satisfactory settlement of the Irish question which has now entered the phase of a treacherous guerilla warfare by Sinn Fein on the Royalists. In foreign policy, things are little better, if not worse. The foolish policy of wasting hundreds of men and million of pounds on the Russian reactionaries, antagonising Russia, the land-grabbing spirit which unjustly hunted after mandates over Mesopotamia, leading to Arab patriotic revolts, the attempted interference in the Polish War and other ventures of a like nature, have led the public believe that the Cabinet is impelled by arrogant and ambitious impertinence.

into dangerous paths, suicidal alike to national honour and safety. The enthusiasm with which Mr. Asquith's election as Member for Paisley was hailed was due to the fact that by organising a vigorous Opposition, he would be able to keep the Coalition along the right road; but his frequent absence from the House and his unavailing handling of the questions as they arose, impaired the confidence in him: he signally failed to organise a telling Opposition. The Liberal Party itself, there is evidence, felt dissatisfied with this state of affairs: the Manchester revolt is the concrete expression of that dissatisfaction; but the revolt led to no satisfactory results.

## iii

In this moribund condition of the Liberal Party, when the Party refused to put in practice its dynamic ideals of progress, such of the Liberals who had an active mind, with whom fine phrases did not pass muster for effective action, men who could not perpetually "wait and see," had to seek support and organisation elsewhere than in the Liberal Party. And the Party with which they

threw in their lot was the new, but rising, one of the Labour Party ; and as the *Nation* stated once, the Labour Party was more and more becoming the best exponent of the greatest ideals of Liberalism. And this young Party attracted consequently many members of the Liberal Party, Wedgwood and Dr. Rutherford among others.

The Party had a clear-cut, well-principled, logical, liberal programme, ready to be carried out in action and existing not in words merely. The programme contained an intelligent scheme of foreign policy as well as a domestic one; and indeed, the latter not a little depended on the former. Its foreign policy was to be one of real peace, not by force, but by reconciliation ; for, as it argued, reconciliation alone begets confidence and on confidence depends the possibilities of reducing military preparations on which again depends the growth of prosperity, commerce and peace. It would therefore ruthlessly remove all obstacles on the path of conciliation such as impossible reparation and indemnity clauses, would refuse intervention on behalf of

Reaction such as those on behalf of the Russian White leaders, would put into practice, "hands off democracy." It would extricate the country from the Irish tangle by bestowing the greatest possible amount of freedom to that unhappy country, by a policy of bold generosity where the Coalition got on with one of cowardly repression. It would conciliate the world by withdrawing itself from all capitalistic Imperialistic ambitions and by really and honestly accepting the principle of self-determination, not for gaining selfish ambitions, but for forwarding the cause of universal democratic and nationalistic civilisation so as to secure a nationalistic Internationalism, if the phrase is permissible.

In the purely domestic field, the programme disdained to forward sectional interests. It would have nothing to do with militaristic designs, would refuse to enforce conscription and all the rest of the militarist's methods. In the economic sphere, it naturally sought to bring about a more just and equitable distribution of the product of industry. It advocated land nationalisation for workers.

It had before it a plan for building a million good houses to palliate the sufferings caused by acute house shortage. In regard to industrial welfare and increased production, it was for the establishment of an industrial democracy on moderate lines. This active and understandable policy better appealed to the Radical temperament of Colonel Wedgwood than the milk-and-water methods of Independent or Coalition Liberalism, and Wedgwood joined the Labour Party.

## iv

It is well to record here the views of Colonel Wedgwood on the economics of labour and production. In the course of the Debate on the Address to His Majesty, the Prime Minister stated that the industrial discontent in the country was due to high prices induced by high wages. Taking this opportunity to criticise the "unsound economics" of the Premier, Colonel Wedgwood said that while the Prime Minister "concentrated his attention on the high wages of labour," "he did not draw attention to the fact that this Government is at the present time

creating and stimulating these high prices by limiting importation into the country and continuing all the restrictions of war trade, so that prices are going higher and higher.” “The Prime Minister dealt with the question of unemployment,” he said, “and told us that shortening the hours of labour from eight to seven or seven to six would inevitably lead to unemployment. In the main, he was right, but not altogether, because a man may well do better work in seven hours than in eight hours. I am aware that after seven hours in this place, even when there are interesting Bills to oppose, one’s powers flag, and that the work done in the last hour is often not so great as that done in the earlier hours of the day.”

He referred then to one more unsound point in the Premier’s arguments. “In connection with the question of unemployment,” he said, “the Prime Minister urged that there should be a vast building programme, not entirely for the providing of houses, but in order to provide work; that there should be great railway enterprise to develop the agricultural areas of this country, but not so

much to get cheap produce to the market as to provide work. All well and good, but let us remember that any form of useless work in proportion to its uselessness is waste and creates as much unemployment as it tries to stop. If you take money out of my pocket for the purpose of paying a man to dig up a field instead of using ploughs, that is useless employment and bad economics. It is waste. It will not enable me to buy the coal, the kettle or other conveniences of life that I want, and that will mean that other people are thrown out of work as a result of the useless work created to deal with unemployment. You must increase, useful, productive work if you want to increase employment, and not try to deal with unemployment by creating work of the kind to which I have referred or by putting on protective tariffs. It is better to create here the goods which we know how to create most cheaply and to exchange them, say, for Tangerine oranges or other things which we can get elsewhere. No artificial form of employment created by taking money out of taxpayer's pockets or by putting on protective tariffs or limiting free importation

can solve the problem of unemployment, but it simply puts an additional burden upon the community, and creates unemployment instead of destroying unemployment."

After thus pointing out that it was the wrong way of doing things that the Premier had adopted, Wedgwood proceeded to point out the right way of doing things. "We must concentrate our attention upon creating useful employment. What is useful work?" he asked and continued : "Useful work is transforming raw materials into goods and we want them. Every creative work transforms raw materials into the finished article. The sort of work we want to stimulate in this country is the application of labour to land and raw materials. If you make our coal easier of access by preventing the owners of the coal from keeping the coal-fields idle ; if you make it more difficult for the owner of building land to keep it idle instead of throwing it into the market ; if you make it a little difficult for the owner of a large farm under grazing when it should be broken up for small cultivation—all this makes it easier for labour to apply itself to the land

and increases opportunities for employment. That is better than artificial stimulus by the State.”\*

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\* *Hansard*, 11th February, 1919.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FIGHT FOR INDIAN REFORM.

We have seen in a former chapter how Colonel Wedgwood was preparing himself, through the Parliamentary Committee which he helped to found and of which he was President, to get the Indian Reform Bill passed through Parliament, if possible with liberal modifications and, if not, in a shape which would grant to India the maximum of self-government proposed to be conceded to it in the Montford Report. The Reform Bill was introduced in the Commons early in June 1920 and it was referred to a Joint Select Committee of the House of Commons and the House of Lords in the space of two or three days with instructions to report on it as soon as possible. The Committee reported early in July and the Bill as amended by the Committee was considered by Parliament early in December and passed. In the subsequent session, the Rules under the Bill were also placed before the Houses of Parliament in July 1920, after they were scrutinised by the Joint Committee.

In all these stages, Wedgwood took an important part in the Debates. We shall, in the subsequent sections, refer to the part played by Colonel Wedgwood in these stages of the discussion of the Reform Bill.

## i

On June 5th, 1919, Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, moved in the House of Commons that the Indian Reform Bill or, as it is officially known, the Government of India Bill, be read a second time. In the Debate on this motion, Colonel Wedgwood made a notable speech. He began with pointing out the implications of the Bill. "This is the birth of India," he said, "as one of the self-governing Dominions of the British Empire. We are only shown in this measure the outline of the first stage of that great development, but every one who votes for this Bill to-day is voting definitely for the placing of India in years to come in exactly the same position as Canada, Australia or South Africa inside the British Empire. That amounts to a complete change in the present system of government in India." "You cannot have bu-

reaucracy and democracy running side by side," he continued. "All that can be done is to make the change from pure bureaucracy gradual." It must not be supposed from this that Wedgwood stood for what is called step by step development. He reiterated that "dyarchy can be excused or justified as a transition measure, but only as a transition measure. We might have started India further ahead in the stream of time. All Governments everywhere depend upon the command of the power of the purse. It has taken us 700 years in this Parliament to acquire the command of the power of the purse. During these 700 years kings have lost their crowns and their heads. Parliaments have been smashed up, and civil war after civil war has rent the country." "I want to avoid starting India in the thirteenth century," he added, "when we might start her in the twentieth century," and went on to give an acute analysis of the principal defects of the Bill.

The defects in procedure as well as those in powers were pointed out. In regard to procedure, he strongly criticised the absence in the Bill it-

self of provisions as to franchise and classification of subjects into reserved and transferred. "Although we talk of the Montagu Chelmsford Report and the Southborough Report," he said, "we can from the Bill itself get no idea as to what the representation is to be, what the constituencies are to be, what the transferred or reserved subjects are to be.....The whole of the 'guts' of the measure is reserved for rules and regulations over which the House has practically no control.....Everything is left to rule and regulation and these are to be made by the local Governments. The local Governments in India have already shown clearly enough by the Papers they have issued to us within the last two or three days what their views on these reforms are. They, and they alone, as is obvious on reading Lord Southborough's Report, have whittled down the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, till we got the Southborough Report. They, and they alone, have now issued this new declaration as to what they regard as carrying out the promise of the 20th August, 1917. A more fraudulent carrying out of that promise could never have been put before any intelligent community.

These people are to have the framing of the rules and regulations. I do not think the House need be surprised if Indians themselves have not the slightest faith in any rules and regulations which may be framed in that way”

Colonel Wedgwood then proceeded to examine the provisions of the Bill. He directed his criticisms both to the constitution and the powers of the Legislative Councils. He was particularly careful to criticise the franchise. “The franchise upon which the whole of this scheme depends is bad,” he said, and hoped that “the people of India, when they see this Bill before them, will direct their attention and attacks particularly against the franchise, and deal with the higher question of the relation of reserved and transferred subjects as of less importance than getting a fair and universal franchise in India which shall give votes, not only to property, but to those who can read and write, to women and to soldiers who have returned from the War.” He opposed communal representation and special representation of all sorts.

Wedgwood also opposed indirect election to the Central Legislature. He thanked the Secretary of State, or "whoever drafted this Bill," "for calling it the Indian Legislative Assembly and not the Imperial Legislative Assembly, because this is the first realisation in an Act of Parliament of that nationhood of India which we are to stimulate and encourage." He condemned the narrowness of the Central Assembly and pleaded for a larger Assembly. "We have 700 members in this House," he said, "and it is not easy even here to pick men of brains and character and ability sufficient to fill the front Government bench. When you are dealing with an absolutely new country like India you should surely provide a sufficient field for political education in the Central Assembly rather than restrict it to this narrow number, and thereby provide an excuse for having indirect election." "The Indians look upon this indirect election," he continued, "for the Indian Legislative Assembly, and the small number of the members of it, as an insidious attack upon Indian nationalism. They want to see the Central Legislative Assembly to develop its functions and become

a Parliament such as ours. They do not want to see India split up into seven provinces, with the possibility, under Clause 12, of these provinces being increased in number indefinitely."

He then pointed out how there was no power of the purse under the Bill either in the Central or, to a somewhat less extent, in the Provincial Councils. He also pointed out that the reserved departments might appropriate the money raised by the Ministers and thus while the popular section of the Government would have the unpopularity for raising the taxes, the bureaucratic section of the Government might benefit by the money so raised. He concluded with a peroration in which he warned Government not to appoint civilians as Governors. "The Governor of the province is, under this Bill," he said, "partly a constitutional king and partly Prime Minister.... The position of a Governor in future is to be that of a man who acts on the advice of his Ministers." He pointed to the success of Governors trained in constitutional positions and said "they have got on much better than

bureaucrats who have simply passed to the position of Governor on promotion." "Their outlook on life," he said, "is different; their sense of responsibility is different." "Do not," therefore, he added, "let us rely solely upon a bureaucracy which is surrendering its privileges to carry out that work."

## ii

In the Committee stage of the discussion of the Bill in the Commons, Colonel Wedgwood had more frequent and greater opportunities of dealing with the details of the Bill. As he anticipated, numerous amendments were made from the Right to whittle down the Bill; and as he stated, he and his colleagues of the Indian Parliamentary Committee and friends, not only opposed these amendments in spirited and well-informed speeches, but also took up the offensive on behalf of India, on lines suggested by the Congress Deputation, moving a series of amendments from the Left. The champions of the bureaucracy and the exploiters in the Commons were not inconsiderable, counting among them such persevering men as Colonel C. E. Yate, Col. John Ward, Sir Henry Craik,

Dr. Hopkinson and others who professed considerable experience of "real" India as they called it. On our side were ranged Colonel Wedgwood, Mr. Ben Spoor, Commander Kenworthy, Mr. Swan, and, to a less extent, Mr. MacCallum Scott. There was a battle royal between the two parties or rather groups; and Mr. Wedgwood's part in this battle was as much conspicuous as, if not more conspicuous than, that of any other Member. We shall presently refer to some of the points he urged in his numerous amendments.

Wedgwood supported Mr. Ben Spoor's amendment suggesting that all subjects except law, justice and police should be transferred to the popular section of the provincial Governments. "This Bill is looked upon by India," he said, "with well-merited hesitation and doubt. The point to which they object most is the very limited amount of confidence shown in these Provincial Governments, in the meagre powers which are handed over, compared with the great promises made in August, 1917. The promise was made not only of representative govern-

ment, but also of the beginning of responsible government. The beginning of responsible government in the legislature is not visible in the Bill. There is not even a pin's point of light, and the few subjects transferred to the provincial legislature are hardly a worthy gift from this great nation." "If we are going to confer responsible government on India, "let us do it as we did in the case of South Africa with a bold *geste* and then we shall find our courage rewarded with the confidence and friendship of the Indian people."

Wedgwood, as we know, laid very great emphasis on the necessity for a liberal franchise. To secure this, he moved in the Committee three amendments relating to the qualifications of the members of the provincial legislatures. "Under the Bill," he said, "and under the Committee's Report, there are three points which ought to be clear. The first is that it should not be necessary that a candidate for these provincial assemblies should be resident in his constituency. In this country a Member can sit for any constituency wherever he lives. In America they have the other plan, and a

man may stand only for the constituency in which he is resident. The difference between these two systems is profound. In England anyone who is a keen Conservative, Liberal or Labour man, who loses his seat, can find a seat elsewhere. In America that is impossible, and if you lose your seat, you have no chance of re-election till another general election comes along. Furthermore, if you happen to live in a constituency which is naturally Conservative and you are naturally Liberal or Labour, you may never have a chance of getting into Parliament at all. The residency qualification is a curse in America. It prevents a man taking a real, live interest in a political career. It makes a man much more the delegate of the vested interests in his constituency than a representative of the whole community." "Leaders are few in number at the present time," he added, "and to intensify the difficulty of getting these leaders elected by prohibiting them from standing in any constituency save that in which they live would make far more difficult than it would otherwise be the selection of leaders to lead the new democracy in India." Wedgwood suspected that this limitation was purposely introduced

to create subservient legislatures. "I cannot help feeling," he said, "that at the back of this desire to limit the choice of candidates for any constituency there is a desire to have representatives in these legislative assemblies who will be less educated, less experienced, and more amenable to political pressure." The other amendments he moved relating to franchise were calculated to see that dismissed Government servants and persons who were convicted of crimes not involving moral turpitude were not disfranchised. In regard to these amendments, he was partially successful.

As to the powers of the legislatures, Wedgwood moved certain amendments calculated to secure to them the right of discussion on important questions on which under the Bill there are serious limitations. Thus, no member could introduce a Bill, relating to the revenues of India without the previous sanction of the Governor. Wedgwood moved that this provision should be amended and opportunity given to discuss the question, reserving to the Governor only the right of veto. The Governor has, under the Bill, the right to stop discussion

if he certified that it affected the safety or tranquility of a province. Wedgwood objected to this as we did. He said there should be right of discussion, and the utmost that Government should demand was that the Bill should not be allowed to become law. The provision was liable to abuse, it being possible to throttle any measure by simply certifying that it affected the safety or tranquility of a province.

Wedgwood also moved several other amendments. One of these suggested that there should be no second chamber, the Council of State, in India. Another recommended that there should not be indirect franchise for the central legislatures. A third was even more important. It provided for fiscal autonomy for India. Wedgwood is a confirmed free-trader, but his belief in self-determination made him grant fiscal autonomy, the power being given to India to do as she liked. Among other amendments were one suggesting that half the Executive Council Members must be those among the elected members of the legislature, another suggesting that the India Council should be abolished, a third

restricting the vested interests of the I.C.S. to those now in service, and a fourth, which was, however, disallowed, recommending that India should be given a declaration of rights on the lines of that suggested by the Congress. He also suggested in his speeches that the Under-Secretary of State should always be an Indian and that the time limit should not be ten years for revision, but within ten years.

Colonel Wedgwood's peroration in the speech on the third reading of the Bill was a touching performance. We cannot reproduce it here. We shall be content with referring to the gracious, but quiet, compliment he paid to Mr. Montagu. "Many years ago," he said, "when the right hon. Gentleman and I were budding geniuses in that overflowing Parliament of 1906, he and I used to walk down to this House together every morning across Kensington Gardens, discussing everything in the universe. I remember on one occasion that he summed up the argument in this way, 'You see, Wedgwood, you can divide all mankind into those who are politicians and

those who are agitators. I am a politician; you are an agitator.' It is perfectly true, and in those *roles* that have been cast for us we have each gone on ever since. I have watched, without regretting the *role* to which I was consigned, the progress of the right hon. Gentleman from office to office, doing good work in every office ... I have never regretted that my line has been in other directions. When I see this Act upon the Statute Book, however, I begin to have doubts as to whether my *role* is the best. After all, I have been fourteen years in this House and I have done nothing—nothing for which I came into Parliament; but he has put this Act upon the Statute Book. There is something to show to the account of a politician. I may have put heart into a few rebels here and there, but this something is upon which history is based and the happiness and the freedom of nations depend." Frankly, Wedgwood expressed his dissatisfaction that his amendments were thrown out, but "I know, and we all know," he added, "that this Bill is the utmost that can ever be got through Lord Curzon, and that it is really a triumph for the right hon. Gentleman that he has gone as far as he has done." He

concluded this memorable speech with a touching peroration to extend freedom to all parts of the Empire and to inaugurate the reforms with the removal of coercion, the withdrawal of coercive laws and the proclamation of amnesty to all political offenders.

## iii

The Rules under the Indian Reform Act were laid before the House of Commons late in July 1920 and were debated upon by that House and passed in a single day. The Indian Press reviewed the Debate expressing great disappointment.\* Two facts emerged from a careful study of that Debate.

The one is undoubtedly that the Labour Party did for us all in their power to liberalise the Rules as far as possible, especially in regard to the constitution of the Councils, in consonance with the approved principles of democracy and, therefore, with our wishes. Col. Josiah Wedgwood represented the Party in the Commons in this its endeavour to

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\*The *Hindu*, August 24, 1920 and the *Bombay Chronicle* the same week in August.

advance our cause. For a full day, the gallant Colonel stood on the floor of the House moving a series of amendments on our behalf. He had no illusions that they would be carried ; he knew that an altogether indifferent house, determined for the most part to vote for the Secretary of State, awaited him : he knew also that he could expect little sympathy from a Secretary of State who, while doing lip service to the supremacy of Parliament and its competence to do anything it liked, always harped on the infallibility of the Joint Committee whose decisions, he suggested in so many words, should, as those of an expert body, be taken on trust. He went further and mildly hinted that it would be a blunder if the House seriously interfered with the Rules. With the Coalition paid legislators, who now constitute the majority in the House, at the Secretary of State's beck and call, it was a predestined, lost cause that Col. Wedgwood had to espouse. But, for our sake, he did not shrink from this unpleasant and self-imposed duty.

Nor was this fact the only disadvantage in which he was placed. He had to argue his

strong case on poor materials ; for, he was denied the use of the papers which might have been of material importance and assistance to him. Such, for instance, were the papers on the basis of which the Joint Committee reversed the original undertaking of the Government of India to devise a scheme for the representation of Labour in Bombay and Bengal as an experimental measure. Left blindfold, the House was compelled to follow the lead of the guide in all matters : and the guide was the Secretary of State. In spite of these obvious disadvantages and handicaps, that Col. Wedgwood should have laboured hard for our cause on behalf of British Labour is of significant augury to us. All but one of his amendments were unacceptable to the House, and yet it was a task undertaken with the full consciousness of the certainty of absolute failure. The reason for this is of course obvious: the Colonel wanted that the opinions of India on these reactionary Rules should be recorded, on behalf of India by the friends of India ; and so were they recorded in the speeches of Col. Wedgwood running to many pages of the *Hansard* and by the *en bloc*

votes as well of the Labour Members as of the reactionaries. The emergence of organised Labour in support of India was not the only feature of the Debate. In striking contrast to the attitude of the Labour M. P.'s. stands that of the Coalition coupon-holders in the House. They voted as solidly for the Secretary of State's negation nods as did Labour for India. This is not, however, the striking point in their attitude. They were bored by Indian affairs and they lingered or loitered about in the Lobby ; and they stayed there only to prevent the House being counted out. Such is the interest that the Mother of Parliaments takes in her great dependency's affairs !

It is no wonder that these most reactionary Rules were passed by the House in a single day—Rules relating not merely to the constitution of our “Parliaments” as Mr. Montagu grandiloquently styled them, but also to their procedure, Rules, not agreed on all hands, but Rules many of which have been opposed tooth and nail by all parties in India.

What is the result ? Let Colonel Wedgwood answer : “ I knew,” said Colonel Wedg-

wood, "that in that House of Commons I had not a ghost of a chance. But I did wish to register my protest against the mischievous tendency of the Rules to set one section of Indians against another—Hindus against Muslims—the Sikhs against both—the Christians against non-Christians—the landlords, industrialists and plutocrats in general against the educated community—and last and most mischievous of all, the country against the towns." He added: "Just as the rules drafted by the bureaucracy ruined the Morley-Minto Reforms, the Government of India Act is spoiled by these Rules. The Joint Select Committee has not done its duty. It has yielded too supinely to the interested advice of the Anglo-Indian official. I am surprised Mr. Montagu should bless these Rules. I am sure that the next Viceroy will find that these Rules are based upon mistrust of India, and without the fullest confidence on both sides, future governance of India is impossible. The bureaucracy has won. The Rules have emasculated the Reform Act. The franchise of the Central legislature is largely confined to landlords, placemen, pensioners and others who can be easily influ-

enced by officials." Those who are able to appreciate the keenness with which Col. Wedgwood has driven home his point in the speeches he made, who realise the ability with which he has handled subtle problems relating to electors and electorates, will not question the competence of the Colonel to be a critic of the Rules; and it is such a discerning critic that pronounces the Rules most reactionary and a complete failure.

## CHAPTER XII

### CEYLON, EGYPT AND RUSSIA.

Colonel Wedgwood's eagerness to liberate subject peoples was not confined to the Indian problem. He made earnest efforts to grant local autonomy to other parts of the Empire as well—Egypt, East Africa, Rhodesia, Ceylon, Mesopotamia and other parts of the Empire as well which were in need of them. We shall refer to the most characteristic of these territories, the political developments therein and the part Wedgwood played in regard to them.

### i

Long before any reforms were thought of for India, Ceylon had been tantalised with schemes of reforms. One of these materialised in the reforms of 1833 or thereabouts under which Ceylon got a Legislative Council with a nominated unofficial element to represent various communities and interests in the Island. These reforms were frankly not democratic in character, but were intended as a

matter of administrative convenience. The War stimulated Ceylon's patriotic ambitions as it did those of other parts of the Empire. In Ceylon, as later in India, the martial law atrocities of 1916 only strengthened Ceylon's feelings that responsible government alone could do away with a repetition of those atrocious blunders endangering the life and liberty of the subject. The Ceylon National Congress, as did the Congress of India, put forward certain demands regarding Ceylon reforms and began to agitate for same. The progress of the Indian Reform movement further stimulated Ceylon to put forward greater activities; and the Ceylon Government had to make some promise of reform.

The Government's scheme of reforms was announced after prolonged delay and after the Governor went to England to consult with the Colonial Office personally and had made such consultation. It was a most disappointing scheme; it fell far short of even the unsatisfactory Montford scheme; and it satisfied nobody. The Milner—Manning scheme provided for a legislative Council of less than 50 members,

38 members excluding the Governor, of which there was to be an unofficial, but not an elected, majority. The purely elected seats were to be only eleven, that is to say, territorial seats. The rest were to be made up of the representatives of various interests and communities and of officials of whom there were to be 14. Thus, the remarks of Wedgwood to the Indian Councils apply with greater force to the Ceylon Council with the added disadvantage that the Council of Ceylon being small is further amenable to greater official influence. The official votes and the European and the Chamber of Commerce votes were practically at the back of Government and these constituted almost a majority by itself; and therefore, the Government's provision of nominated members was a superfluous additional protection of their interest for which there was no justification.

In regard to powers also the Ceylon Council, both in respect of procedure and in respect of intrinsic powers, was inferior to the Montagu-Chelmsford provincial councils. The Governor under the Milner-

Manning scheme is master of the discussion in the Council. He is himself the President and has great disciplinary powers over the Council and the members. The Council has no budget right. It could be ignored altogether by the Governor in legislation, he having power to declare a measure passed with his official votes, ignoring the unofficial majority altogether.

Col. Wedgwood, in the Debate on the Consolidated grants, raised this question, pointed out the defects of the measure and observed that Ceylon by the greater homogeneity of population, by better educational attainments and by more intimate touch with English practice and western ideals and for other reasons was better qualified than India to receive a liberal measure of reforms. He displayed in his speech an intimate knowledge of Ceylon conditions which at once attracted Ceylon's attention and which earned for him the eternal gratitude of Ceylon. His espousal, however, did not meet with the deserved success, the reforms were not liberalised and Ceylon has resolved to boycott the Reforms.

Colonel Wedgwood similarly espoused the cause of the Egyptians. Egypt came into British hands towards the close of the last century. It was nominally a dependency of Turkey. But the Khedive of Egypt got into debt and the financiers of Europe, chiefly the English and the French financiers, got alarmed at the financial ruin to which the Khedive's ruinous ways were landing Egypt in and got control of his affairs. By force of circumstances, Britain had to involve herself in Egypt and she got control of the administration practically into her own hands. She placated German and French jealousy by diplomacy and her administration of Egypt, notably at the time of Lord Cromer, Sir Elden Gorst and Lord Kitchener, was so successful, her irrigation and other schemes so fruitful that order was easily evolved out of chaos and the solvency of Egypt and even her prosperity was established.

The country was developed, but not so the people of Egypt. They clamoured for independence. The Egyptian Nationalist Party

consisting of Egyptian patriots set themselves to gain it. They were prosecuted for sedition and oppressed in other ways. They resorted to underground ways and there were secret societies and plots and murders. Martial law had to be declared and kept in force for eight or nine months. But the whole country was so loudly clamouring for independence that even Lord Milner was forced to conclude that some concession had to be made. The Milner Mission went to Egypt, but was boycotted by the Nationalists, that is, by all of any consequence in the country. Meanwhile, the Powers recognised the Protectorate of Britain over Egypt, but the Nationalists were stubborn and Milner had to negotiate with them and a workable basis of Egyptian independence has been arrived at between Zaghloul Pasha, the Egyptian Nationalist leader, and the British Government.

Wedgwood throughout condemned the Martial Law atrocities of Egypt as he did those of the Punjab and every time that opportunity arose pointed out the need for granting freedom to Egypt within the Empire.

## iii

Wedgwood's attitude regarding foreign policy is that of the man in the street of a truly democratic country. He would not move a finger to upset the self-determined internal arrangements of a country. His was not, however, a policy of masterly inactivity ; had that been so, he would have opposed the Anglo-German War. Neither was it an interventionist one in the sense that it was looking out for opportunities for expansionist or jingoistic imperialistic ventures. He would however lend a helping hand to the Allies who deserved such help by treaty arrangements or on other legitimate grounds ; but he would not seek for quarrels. His attitude in short was that of Wordsworth's happy warrior.

If we bear these facts in mind, it will be easy to understand Wedgwood's spirited and persevering opposition in the Commons to Mr. Churchill's policy of helping the Russian adventurers, Koltchak, Denikin, Yudenitch and other White soldiers. Wedgwood again and again proved to the hilt that these were reactionaries

masquerading as friends of civilisation. He pointed out their bloodthirsty conduct towards prisoners whom they cruelly butchered or, worse, slowly starved to death. "The Red Terror is horrible," he said, "but the White Terror is even more horrible, because it is far more extensive and affects a far larger number of persons than the Red Terror. The sort of operations of war carried on by these rival bands of banditti in Russia is a form of warfare with which we ought not to be associated."

He was for these his views ridiculed as a man with Bolshevik sympathies, but in fact he was nothing of the sort. He pleaded for justice and fair-play for all, whether Bolsheviks or any one else; for him there was nothing to choose between Bolsheviks and the Russian reactionaries who, he knew by experience on the spot, wanted to re-establish Czarism in Russia; hence his opposition to Churchillism.

## CHAPTER XIII

### DIRECT ACTION AND NON-CO-OPERATION.

We have shown in an earlier chapter that what with the iniquities of the Coalition and the moribund condition of the Independent Liberal Party, Britain was being rapidly plunged into a foreign as well as a domestic policy for which there was not a tittle of support in the country. In the field of foreign politics, the Churchill interventionist policy in Russia in support of the White Terrorists and reactionaries disgusted the better minds of the country. Labour stoutly denounced it; and public opinion in general, except the Capitalist Press, especially *The Times*, despite their powerful voice, soon veered round to the Labour view.

In the Commons, however, the Coalition had a coupon majority; and with the support of this paid majority which had almost as little or as much right to represent the country as the man in the moon—so out of touch was the Commons with the country—the Coalition

hurried on with one measure of reactionary intervention after another. Their high-handed interventionist policy reached a crisis in their decision to support the Poles against Soviet Russia when the Soviet Russian invasion of Poland was undertaken purely and clearly as a measure of defence made necessary by the invasion of Russia by Polish junkers. Labour could not tolerate this high-handed flouting of public opinion; it formed a Council of Action of 15 members composed of representatives of the Trade Union Congress, Labour Members of Parliament and the Labour Party, which 15 members later co-opted seven more to their number to make the Council thoroughly representative of Labour. Wedgwood was a Member of this Council. The Council was condemned by the hostile Press as a revolutionary body thoroughly unconstitutional inasmuch as it set itself to nullify the authority of the Government. We shall see presently what Wedgwood felt on this question.

i

In an article which he recently contributed to *Foreign Affairs*, Wedgwood explained the

nature of the Council of Action and the reasons for the formation thereof. "That a Council of Action should have been formed to deal with a matter of foreign rather than of domestic policy," he wrote, "is significant. It is extra-constitutional and it is the work of the Labour Party. The unobservant would have expected that if Labour went outside the Constitution it would have been in connection with some question that directly affected bread and butter. That was not so, and for two reasons. First, because the Labour movement to-day is an idealist movement. Its appeals are to a love of justice, of peace, of international solidarity. The old parties, the pulpit, have failed. We are their heirs. They are the class parties; Labour stands for the world. It was all so natural, therefore, that when *The Times* and the Prime Minister raised the spectre of war and revived the menace and saturnalia of August, 1914, Labour opinion boiled over into its Council of Action to control the governing class."

That was not, however, the only reason. The impotence of Parliament in foreign affairs

was another potent cause. It was in fact the immediate cause. "In domestic matters," he wrote, "Parliament still has some voice in what goes on; interests balance one another; criticism is not only possible but publishable; the heads of Departments are smaller men who can be pounced on by a Prime Minister or by a halfpenny Press. In foreign affairs, however, Parliament has now no voice and no ears. The Members want neither to speak nor hear nor understand; if they may be a band of white-robed choristers chanting in unison their daily hymn of hate, that is enough. Even if they did wish to do more, they cannot, because the administration is aloof and independent. Neither Prime Minister nor Foreign Secretary is present, nor interested in the remarks or the opinions of Members, for they despise them. The great Press has no longer the paper nor the inclination to print the arguments it dislikes. Gone too are all the men who made foreign politics a study—Dilke, King, Ponsonby, J. M. Robertson, Ramsay MacDonald, Trevelyan, Outhwaite, Snowden. Thus, there are only left rather amateur musketeers and an isolated Lord Robert Cecil to be the regular butt of

Mr. Lloyd George's clap-trap oratory. And then there is the chorus, happy in dividends, united in vocal hatred of all criticism."

Wedgwood continued: "With such a House, the Departments can take liberties never attempted before. The Ministerial answers from the Foreign and War Offices and Admiralty have less and less relation to truth. The prospect of a war with Russia has given them a zest in the game of deceit. When tired of fooling Parliament they proceed to fool one another. The Admiralty goes ahead in the Baltic and Black Sea serenely indifferent to Mr. Lloyd George. When the army ceases to send Baron Wrangel munitions from home, it can always continue to send them from Batoum, and tell the Leader of the House, after he has made the usual denial. Lloyd George for peace and the Departments for war make the game of deception peculiarly easy. But if this game goes on in Whitehall where chiefs can give orders, it is obvious that in distant capitals and vanishing 'fronts,' the agents of the Departments can disregard Parliament and chiefs alike."

For impotence took possession, not of the Parliament merely, but of the Ministers as well, their agents acting contrary to what their principals professed in the Commons. "We have Lord D'Aberou," continues Wedgwood, "telling the Poles that the harder they persist in fighting, the greater will be the support given them. Such a wild statement is hardly commented on. It is so natural. The Foreign Office and War Office Agents everywhere know that the Bolsheviks are the enemy of all gentlemen and what Mr. Lloyd George says about peace is so much hope for a tiresome working class in England. Even if Ministers do mean what they say in Parliament, we know that their agents abroad continue to bolster up Whites against Reds, everywhere, always, and with fortunate stupidity. In the whole of the Foreign Office there is not one man even liberal. Who could trust that lot to-day? That is why the Constitution has broken down as far as foreign-affairs are concerned. Foreign affairs mean something to the workers now—after the war, after the Russian revolution, after the White Terror, after the accumulating-

evidence of the solidarity of the old world in its hatred of the new."

It is this state of things that led Labour to act for itself on behalf of the nation at large; and if it succeeded, as it did, it was because, as the *New Statesman* put it, it had the nation behind it. "We have had enough of this sort of thing," wrote Wedgwood. "Crowned heads and Foreign Offices have had notice. This last outburst of old man's war-fever has given us our chance. The first Council of Action has been formed, and Parliamentary impotence has formed it. In some form or another—possibly as a Labour General Staff, it will continue till Parliament has some control over these reactionary diplomatists and hair-brained military missions—that is, till we have another Parliament and have set up a proper Foreign Affairs Committee and democratic body, not merely the heads of the Foreign Office. Meanwhile, let that office remember the maxim of Mirabeau: 'Beware of the people, that people which, to become dangerous, has only to fold its arms.' That, then, is the meaning and purpose of the

Council of Action. It was an effort of the *demos*—a successful effort at that—to transcend the technical obstacles with which a nominally democratic organisation was in practice thwarted in its attempt to function in the right way, and thwarted successfully. The defects in a democratic society by its very genius distil their own cure.

ii

The formation of the Labour Council of Action will be considered by history as a tremendous advance in the conception of democratic methods. With the progress of democracy, wherever existing constitutions fail to respond to the general will of the community, that general will find out extra-constitutional means whereby to assert itself. The framers of the American Constitution exerted their utmost to hold democracy in check by numerous deliberately provided provisions, but to-day every student of the elements of that Constitution knows how the general will of the *demos* has, by extra-constitutional means, secured that its influence shall be stamped on the policy of the country. The defects in the

democratic machinery will, ere long, under the impulse of the pressure of the general will, somehow contrive to distil their own cure ; and the Council of Action in England was but such a cure distilled under and out of the impotence or the unreality of Parliament. On this, however, it is needless and out of place here to speculate.

## iii

Of far greater interest to us is the bearing of this new development on our political progress in our country. Does it afford us a lesson? If so, what is that lesson? Doubtless, that lesson is that Non-co-operation is an extra-constitutional—not *unconstitutional*—weapon of which it is quite legitimate and necessary to make use. Wedgwood's quotation from Mirabeau leaves us in no doubt as to his opinions on direct action which is but a form of Non-co-operation.

Some have misunderstood his attitude towards this all-important topic in Indian politics at the present day ; but that attitude is clear. Wedgwood believes that Non-co-operation is a justifiable and a very useful weapon ; but he feels that before we resort to so serious a

thing as that, we ought to make ourselves sure that no less desperate remedy exists to secure our goal most easily and effectively. That certainly is a prudent dictum which no patriot could afford to ignore.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CONCLUSION.

We have now come to the end of our sketch, have surveyed the surroundings in which the subject of our sketch was brought up, have noticed his early training and youthful activities, have set forth his early war services followed later by peace services, have sketched his early Parliamentary career, his connection with the Land Values Question and the natural bent of his mind as revealed by the part he took in the Taxation of Land Values Campaign. We have then followed his activities during the Anglo-German War, have given an account of his views on the Mesopotamia Campaign on the Committee to enquire into which he was nominated a Member by the Commons, have pointed out how these views were later borrowed by the Army in India, or the Esher, Committee, have summarised his activities in the Commons signalised by a number of questions relating to India and other countries and persons, espousing the civil and constitutional liberties of subject races. His great and

meritorious services to India in connection with the Rowlatt Laws, the Punjab atrocities and the Khilafat wrong, as revealed by his own speeches, have next received our attention. Nor have we omitted his noteworthy part in the Indian Budget Debates almost from the day on which he entered Parliament, a part which, as his own words we have given in the text reveal, displayed considerable and intimate touch with Indian progressive opinion so much so indeed that they might have been the words of Tilak or any other progressive Indian leader. The comprehensive account of the part he played in connection with the Reform campaign, as revealed by his words which we have quoted, speaks for itself. His attitude and his services to other subject countries, Ceylon and Egypt, for instances, and, indeed, his views on the British domestic as well as foreign policy which led him to sever his connection with the Liberal Party, we have fully set forth above. Nor have we omitted to indicate what his views are on the most burning question of the day—Non-co-operation and other modes of extra-constitutional action.

## i

We shall now essay to give a general estimate of the man and his work. Our own view is that that is self-evident. That is to say, those who have followed the preceding pages ought to have gathered for themselves a sufficiently accurate impression of the man and his work. To some, who have cared to study his work Wedgwood is no more than one of those eccentric men who take up things as they come, espouse the cause of all and sundry without rhyme or reason, without principle or method, a sort of, maybe, kindly-hearted and good-humoured beings, a sort of those modern Don Quixotes, whose activities are not less dangerous because they are well-meant. To others he is an enigma. They could not associate with a practical and gallant soldier, one who had fought and, aye, won his laurels too in the field, a conduct which is deadly to junkerism and jingoistic imperialism. But to all alike, Wedgwood is a sincere and a gallant man; and that is a tribute which is perhaps sufficient far to satisfy the ambitions of some of the greatest among us.

To us, however, Wedgwood is not an enigma nor a dogmatising, kindly-hearted, crazy or silly, politician. He is, in our opinion, a practical idealist. He does not believe that Rome could be built in a day ; but he does believe that that we could begin building it to-day laying the right sort of foundation. He knows the value of practical and wise compromise. He certainly is not an impatient idealist ; and he is far removed from the get-on-somehow sort of politicians to whom what is is best. He is a progressive, and a progressive of the advanced type, but not a head-long plunger into the unknown deep. To him, Order and Progress are not related, the one as the antithesis of the other ; he sees complete harmony between them : indeed, he holds that Progress is the real pilot of Order out of danger, that to shut out Progress is to drift into dangerous shoals, or if we mix metaphors, is to sit on the safety valve. There is no wonder that sometime ago, the prophesy was ventured by a newspaper that if Labour came into power in Britain, Wedgood would be the Viceroy of India and Mr. Ben Spoor the Secretary of State.

## ii

Some suppose that the dominant characteristic of Wedgwood is that he is a born fighter and that in fighting he finds his element. Perhaps they are right in a sense. We know Wedgwood described himself as an agitator. Here is a picture of Wedgwood as he appealed to the *Daily Herald*:

Colonel Josiah Wedgwood, D.S.O., member for New-castle-under-Lyme, is a fighter first, last, and all the time. To seek out tyranny and diligently slay it, to protest against injustice and proclaim the rights of man, are the consuming passions of his life.

In the first century he would certainly have fought alongside Paul with beasts at Ephesus. In the twentieth, when not employed in Antwerp, France, Gallipoli, or East Africa, he fights at Westminister. He conducts a perpetual guerilla warfare against the exploiting interests. Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, Under-Secretaries, Ministers, and the National Democratic Party—Wedgwood is ever ready to lead an assault against them, careless whether any follow him or none.

He asks more questions than any man in Parliament. He is ready—and perfectly competent—to make a withering speech on any subject. No House of Commons, no debate, would be complete without

him. Wedgwood is a crusader for the cause of the underdog, whether conscientious objector or dispossessed native under the British flag. He has done more than any single man to spoil the Russian gamble. His speeches on Koltchak, Denikin, Mannerheim and Yudenitch make the "Friends of Russia" gibber in their seats. It is related that, in a hot corner at Gallipoli, a certain man answered his call for prompt action at a critical moment. "I need hardly say," remarked Wedgwood, "that he was a single-taxer from Glasgow."

Violently interrupted recently in the House as to why, if he so loved the Bolsheviks, he did not go and join them, he replied instantly: "If it's got to come to a class war, that's my side."

The Radicals have lost, and the Labour Party have gained, a very able and dashing swordsman in "Jos." But he remains the most independent man in Parliament.  
—H.J.G. in the "*Herald*" (London), September 5th.

We shall note down here that Wedgwood is a staunch follower of those remarkable philanthropic idealists like Henry George and, to a certain extent, of Tolstoy and, through him, his disciple our own Mahatma Gandhi. He confesses he is not always able to follow them

in practice, but when the ideal is in view we know whither practice will lead.

## iii

Wedgwood, it must not be supposed, is a mere soldier. As a Parliamentarian, Wedgwood is counted among the few rising ones in the Labour benches by the *Daily News* Parliamentary correspondent as by others. He is a man of culture, having his own learned hobby, and is an author to boot. He is deeply interested in archaeology. Indeed, he is prominently connected with an English archaeological society. He has written a well-known history of the pottery industry of Staffordshire and his numerous pamphlets written in conjunction with his wife on Land Values Taxation and on the Road to Freedom are well-known among those interested in the subject.

Such is the man whom we in India count among our stoutest champions. We have no doubt his new experience gained by his tour in this country will be of greater help to us.





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